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ABSTRACT

Data and information for a study of living away from home (LAFH) facilities for isolated students in Queensland were obtained from surveys of boarding schools and student hostels; a number of boarding schools and student hostels were visited and discussions were also held with isolated parents and student borders. While structural demographic changes in rural areas of Queensland have contributed to the underutilization of boarding facilities, the fact that so many isolated children live away from home indicates that these families have a strong commitment to education. In many cases, however, children must endure not only the problems of separation from their families, but also the physical discomfort of poor quality facilities and the emotional upheavals of regimentation. Improvements in living standards of children LAFH and better standards of pastoral care are urgently needed. There is a continuing need to service the educational requirements of these families, and LAFH facilities have an on-going vital role to play. If the depreciation of boarding facilities is allowed to continue, then parents will seek an alternative source of schooling close to home. Providing such schooling would then probably lie with the State government and would be very expensive indeed. (BRR)

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A report on living away from home facilities for isolated students in Queensland

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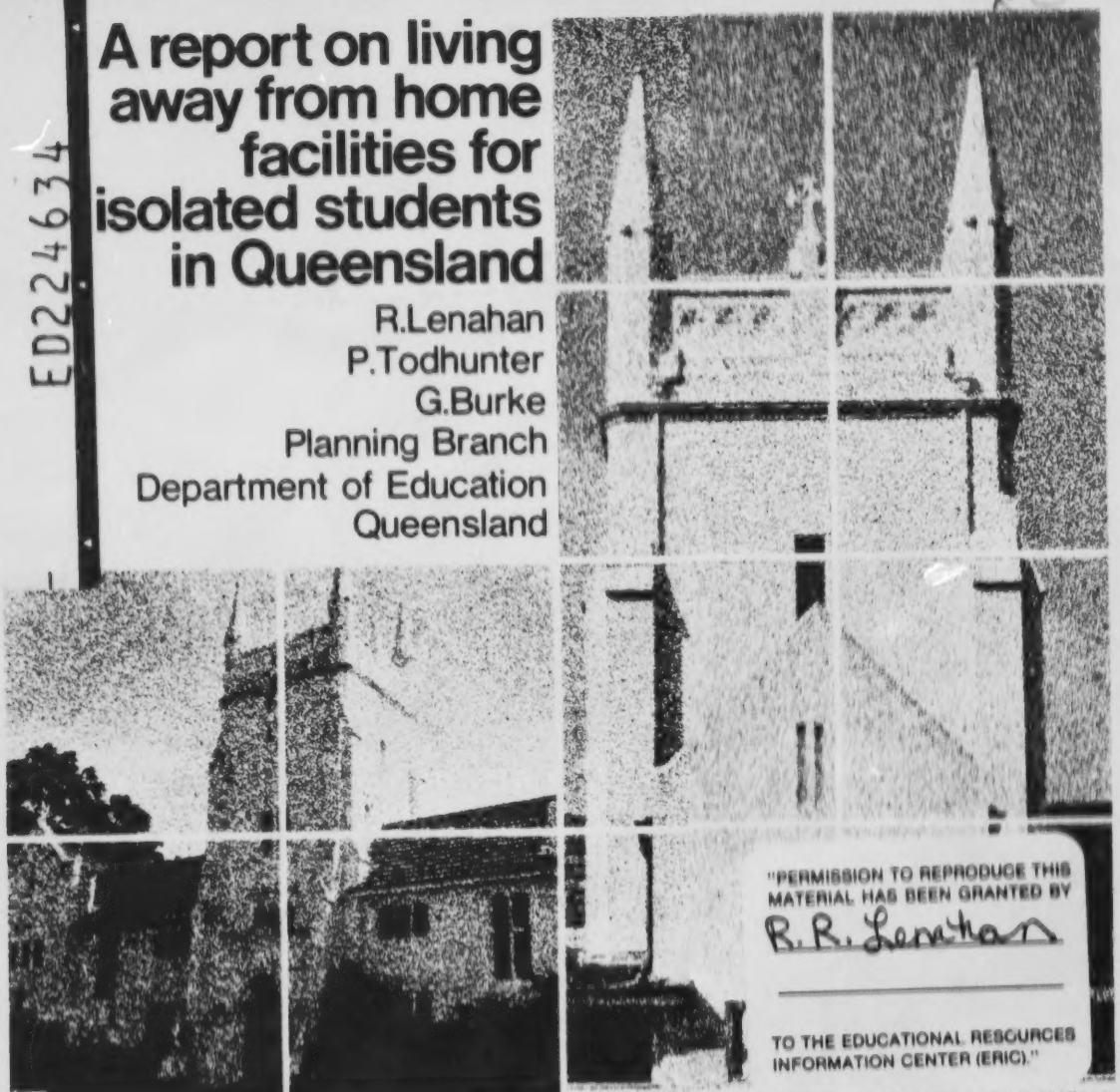

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This report is the culmination of a major research project which could not have been undertaken without the co-operation, support, and assistance of a considerable number of people and certain organisations. We are indebted to them all for their help.

In particular we would like to thank the Director-General of Education and senior officers of the Department of Education for approving the conduct of this research and fully supporting it. As well, assistance from the Schools Commission by way of a grant to help defray costs of the project is greatly appreciated.

So many people contributed to the data collection phases of the study that it is impossible to recognise them all, but specific mention must be made of the isolated parents who completed the questionnaires, the school principals and hostel management committees who participated in interviews and the Catholic Education Office which provided unqualified assistance. Other organisations deserving special mention include the Queensland Country Womens' Association, the Association of Independent Schools in Queensland, the Isolated Children's Parents Association and the Presbyterian-Methodist Schools' Association.

A special word of thanks must also go to the principals of schools and managers of hostels who extended hospitality to members of the research team during their field trips. Often, the most impressive feature of their visits was the personal qualities of these principals and managers, and their devotion to the improvement of boarding conditions for their students. These attributes, however, are extremely difficult to capture effectively in a research report such as this.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Many families living in rural areas of Queensland are very isolated. Their homes are located in remote parts of the State where the population density is low, and where distances limit opportunities for frequent social contact between them. They lack access to community facilities which are commonplace in most urban centres and as schools are not within easy reach, these families experience difficulties educating their children. In general, they have three alternative ways of providing access to primary and secondary schools. The first alternative is to arrange for the conveyance of their children over long distances to enable them to attend a school on a daily basis. The second is to keep their children at home and teach them by using correspondence lessons and materials; and thirdly, they may send their children away from home for extended periods of time to centres where daily school attendance is possible. This report is concerned with the demand for this latter alternative — living away from home facilities — and their provision within Queensland.

The genesis of this study may be traced to numerous reports of difficulties being experienced by both the parents of children who live away from home, and the operators of facilities that accommodate students. Several of these were documented in a report of the Senate Standing Committee for Education and the Arts which investigated the education of isolated children in 1976. It summarised the problems of boarding schools, for example, by stating that:

> *"Independent boarding schools have traditionally served that sector of the isolated rural community which can afford the fees but, as education costs continue to rise and rural incomes decline, the number of families who can meet these costs is decreasing and most independent boarding schools report an increasing number of vacancies".*[1]

The Senate Standing Committee realized that, to some extent, the results of its enquiry were a matter for conjecture, as it found a dearth of suitable data for evaluating the needs and requirements of isolated children. Accordingly, it proposed that a study be undertaken into the *"present and future demand for accommodation facilities for children in country areas"*. This proposal, coupled with the Queensland Department of Education's concern over the economic viability of living away from home facilities, and the effectiveness of subsidies paid to parents to assist them with expenses associated with the accommodation of children who are away from home, led to the instigation of this study. The Schools Commission has supported and partly funded the project.

The aims of the study have been to:

(a) assess the demand for accommodation facilities for students from country areas who live away from home to attend school;
(b) determine the types of living away from home facilities preferred by parents and to assess the extent to which these are available; and
(c) determine the present supply of facilities, associated costs, and quality of provision.

The study has accumulated a considerable amount of statistical data and other information not previously available concerning facilities used by remote parents to accommodate their children within easy daily reach of a school. Some data about the use of correspondence courses, and travelling distances to the nearest suitable school, have also been reported. However, it must be stressed that due to the absence of published information about isolated children, this study has been exploratory and the results throughout are mainly descriptive.

Data and information for the study has been obtained from four surveys. The first of these was conducted by the Planning Branch of the Queensland Department of Education late in 1977. It comprised a questionnaire issued to virtually all rural families in Queensland which had one or more children living away from home to attend a school, or which made use of correspondence education programs. Altogether 3 500 questionnaires were distributed. Their objective was to ascertain the type of arrangements employed by families who send their children away from home, together with their attitudes towards these arrangements. The second survey was conducted by the Schools Commission. As part of its regular statistical collection from non-state schools, the Commission obtained data from boarding schools in Queensland in 1974 and 1976. These schools generously agreed to allow Planning Branch access to the questionnaire responses for analysis. Thirdly, a similar type of questionnaire was sent to operators of student hostels throughout Queensland. Fourthly, Planning Branch personnel visited a number of boarding schools and student hostels and discussed operating difficulties. Where possible discussions were also held with isolated parents and student boarders.

In the next two chapters of this report — Chapters II and III — background information is provided which outlines the need for living away from home facilities for isolated students in Queensland. As well, education and accommodation facilities which are available are described. Quantitative data from the parents questionnaire, the boarding school statistical returns and the student hostel questionnaire; together with qualitative comments arising from observations about boarding schools and student hostels form the main part of this report and this information is found in Chapters IV to VIII. Concluding comments are contained in Chapter IX.

Reference

[1] Australian Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Art: *Report on Education of Isolated Children*. Canberra, July 1976, p. 37.

Chapter II

FACTORS AFFECTING RURAL EDUCATION

The Education Act in Queensland makes attendance at school compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 15 years. Normally children in this age range progress through seven years of primary schooling and three years of secondary education. Although many attain the age of 15 years during their tenth year at school, they do not usually terminate their enrolment immediately, but remain at school to complete year 10 and obtain a Junior Certificate. Approximately one half of these students voluntarily proceed with their secondary education and remain at school to enter year 11.

The demand for primary and secondary education in the State may, therefore, be regarded as comprising two components. One of these arises from legislation, the other from the combined requirements of individual students. However derived, the overall demand is quite extensive, and at the school census taken in August 1979 about 443 000 students were enrolled full-time in 1 569 State and non-State schools throughout Queensland.

To cater for this demand a variety of school facilities are provided. These multifarious arrangements have been established over several decades and are the outcome of a network of several interacting factors which have helped to develop Queensland's education system. Among the most influential of these factors is the pattern of settlement of the State. In particular this has determined the number, size, and types of schools located in various areas. This chapter examines the demographic characteristics of Queensland, reviews the provision of schools in rural areas, and identifies the need for living away from home facilities.

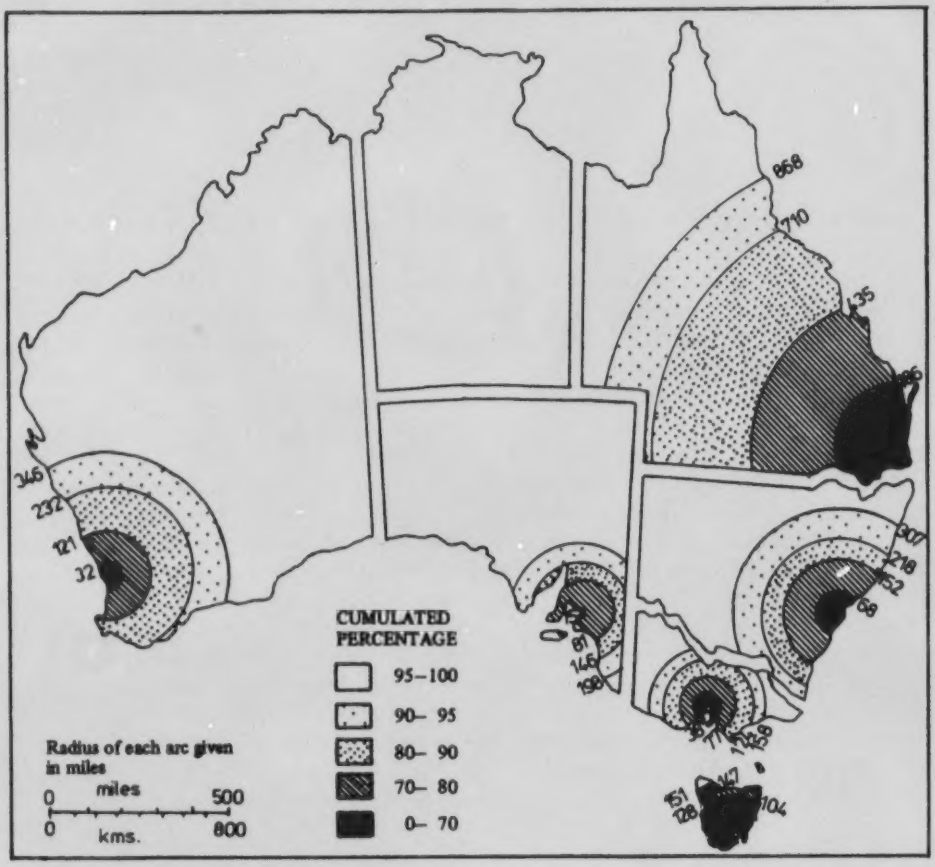
DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Although all Australian States have a densely settled capital city and relatively sparsely settled rural districts, Queensland's population is more decentralised than the other States. Figure 2.1 which is based on statistics compiled by Holmes[1] clearly indicates that almost 20% of Queensland's population is located more than 800 kilometres from the capital, but in Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales the percentages are around 3%, 0.1% and 1% respectively. Victoria and Tasmania are geographically small, and obviously do not have extensive areas which are sparsely settled. The comparatively different pattern of population distribution in Queensland means that, relative to the other Australian States, it must provide a higher proportion of schools in rural areas.

Within Queensland, population density varies from the closely settled east coast where most provincial cities have been established,* to the sparsely settled far west and north of the State where some shires have a population density of less than 1 person per 50 square kilometres. Queensland's overall population distribution is illustrated in Figure 2.2. While it

* The only inland centres which are comparable in size to the provincial cities on the coast are Toowoomba and Mt Isa.

Figure 2.1: Australian states: Population percentiles by distance from capital city



Source: Holmes, J. H. Population Concentration, Dispersion in Australian States, Australian Geographic Studies, Vol. XI, 1973.

is economically feasible to provide school facilities within easy reach of students in densely settled areas, in areas where only a few students can reach a school, the per capita cost of establishing normal school facilities is prohibitive.

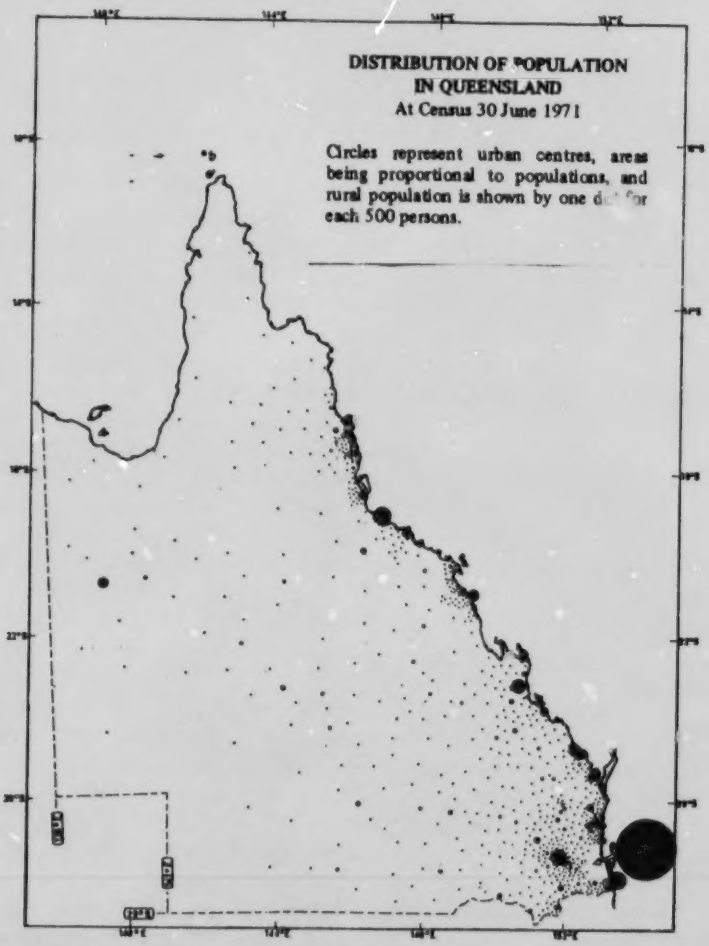
As a direct consequence of the pattern of settlement, a gradation in the establishment of school facilities in various parts of the State is discernable. In urban areas schools are fairly large and well equipped. They offer a wide range of school subjects and educational activities. Families have ready access to schools and can either have their children attend on a daily basis in compliance with legislative requirements, or choose to extend their children's educational experiences beyond the years of compulsory attendance. On the other hand families living in rural areas may find it more difficult to obtain ready access to schools because of the lower population density and scattered patterns of settlement common in Queensland's non-urban areas.

The rural settlements of Queensland may be classified, in a general way, to fit into the following types suggested by Brown.[2]

(a) mining communities;
(b) rural service towns;
(c) serviced grazing areas; and
(d) outback areas.

As far as the provisón of schools is concerned, the needs of mining communities and rural service towns are similar. Both mining towns and rural service towns are settlements which vary in population from several hundred to several thousand. The mining communities tend to be small company operated towns which are concentrated around a single industry and are located in remote parts of the State. They often experience a high turn

Figure 2.2: Distribution of population in Queensland


DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION
IN QUEENSLAND
At Census 30 June 1971
Circles represent urban centres, areas being proportional to populations, and rural population is shown by one dot for each 500 persons.

Source: Queensland Year Book, 1975, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

5

over in population. The rural service towns are more numerous, tend to be older than the mining towns and are more widely scattered throughout the State. Both offer a variety of services to the inhabitants of the surrounding districts, and as service towns, they usually provide banks, a post office, schools, health care, community centres, household and farm supplies, and agencies for the sale of livestock and produce. Often they are rail, road or air transport centres. Their prosperity is largely dependent on the prosperity of the district they serve.

Most mining and rural service towns have medium sized primary state schools, and in some cases they are also serviced by small non-state schools. These centres are not usually large enough to support a full range of secondary school facilities although many of them have several secondary classes attached to the state primary school. This arrangement is known as a secondary department and for the most part involves offering courses from year 8 to year 10. Consequently, families who wish to continue the education of their children beyond the compulsory years may have to consider living away from home arrangements.

The third form of settlement pattern, the serviced grazing areas, usually comprise small holdings which are worked by 1 or 2 families. The population density in these areas varies between 20 and 40 square kilometres per person. These property holdings are prevalent in sub-coastal beef areas such as the region west of Rockhampton and in the inland sheep grazing areas around Cunnamulla. The serviced grazing areas are generally provided with roads, railways, telephones, mail runs and a limited number of schools.

Families usually live in close proximity to service centres so that one day trips to town are possible. To attend school on a daily basis, children from families in these areas frequently find it necessary to travel long distances, often on specially arranged school buses. However, families located too far from schools or school transportation routes must choose between the use of correspondence lessons and living away from home arrangements. Because the range of secondary facilities in these areas is limited, families with older children are more likely to have to consider the living away from home alternative.

The fourth and most isolated settlement pattern results from large, outback properties located in such regions as the Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf Country and the Channel Country. These properties are very isolated despite the increasing use of light aircraft and modern communication equipment. They are separated from neighbours by considerable distances and connecting roads between properties are often little more than bush tracks. They are likely to have infrequent mail and newspaper deliveries, and no access to television. As daily attendance at school is impossible for the children who live on these properties, correspondence lessons, perhaps with the aid of a governess, or living away from home, are the only alternatives for schooling.

Families living in any one of the rural areas defined by Brown may find that their children have to leave home to attend school in contrast to the inhabitants of towns and cities who have school facilities from years 1 to 12 readily available. Living away from home is almost mandatory for children from outback areas if their parents want them to have similar educational experiences to those in the cities. For families who depend on schools located in serviced grazing areas and in rural towns, the need to send children away from home increases as children progress into higher year levels.

The population sparsity of rural Queensland makes it difficult, if not impossible, to provide school facilities on a scale similar to that of towns and cities which have large assured enrolments. Moreover, the supply problem is further complicated by population shifts, as neither private organisations nor the State can afford to establish expensive permanent school facilities in centres that may be unable to sustain a continuing need for them.

Recent population trends have increased the uncertainty associated with school provision in rural areas. During the last 10 years families have moved away from inland country shires of the State and a decline in the population of these shires has occurred. The decreases in selected shires are shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Selected Queensland shires with significant population decreases, 1966-76

Shire and statistical division [a]	Shire population		
	1966	1976	Decrease %
Croydon (Far North)	237	222	6
Etheridge (Far North)	1 007	940	7
Jericho (Fitzroy)	1 504	1 220	19
Paroo (South West)	3 767	3 021	20
Balonne (South West)	5 912	4 580	23
Wondai (Wide Bay — Burnett)	4 378	3 329	24
Flinders (North West)	3 788	2 875	24
Barcoo (Central West)	920	657	29
Aramac (Central West)	1 658	1 059	36

[a] The ABS statistical divisions are illustrated in the maps in Appendix 1.

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1966 and 1976

Shires in the south west and central parts of the State have been the most affected by population losses. Although reductions have also occurred in some areas of North Queensland, they have tended to be less severe. Much of the exodus from these areas seems to have been from rural towns. This feature of the rural population change was reported in a study by Marsden[3] in 1972. He found that between 1966 and 1971 there were declines in almost half of the State's 67 towns with populations of 1 000 to 5 000 persons. Pastoral towns of the south west and towns in sugar producing areas of the north coast were most affected although the populations of sugar towns appear to have stabilized somewhat. Outward migration has continued in towns located in pastoral areas and this is illustrated by Table 2.2 which shows population decreases in selected towns between 1966-1976.

Table 2.2: Selected Queensland rural towns with significant population decreases, 1966-1976

Town	*Population*		
	1966	*1976*	*Decrease (%)*
Wondai	1 214	1 118	8
Julia Creek	729	650	11
Hughenden	2 069	1 811	12
Longreach	3 873	3 354	13
Barcaldine	1 796	1 443	20
Charleville	4 881	3 802	22
Dirranbandi	840	587	30

Source: ABS, *Census of Population and Housing*, 1966 and 1976

To summarise, it is fair to say that three demographic conditions create difficulties for the provision of schools in rural areas. The first is a relatively low population density, which means that when schools are established, they are relatively small in size. Secondly, the pattern of settlement is so geographically uneven that schools cannot be established in some parts of the State. Thirdly, significant reductions in the size of rural towns, especially in the long term, may reduce the enrolment of schools and could eventually make some rural school facilities redundant.

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SCHOOLS IN RURAL AREAS

Despite the demographic problems and uncertainties associated with the demand for schools in rural areas, most communities now have access to primary schools; many have secondary facilities up to year 10 level, and in a few centres years 11 and 12 are also available. Consequently the demand for living away from home facilities, at least for reasons of isolation, is a relatively small component of the total demand for schools throughout the entire state. Clearly there is a direct relationship between the spread of school facilities, and the need for children to live away from home. The more extensively the former is provided, the less the latter is required.

Most schools now available in rural areas are operated by the Department of Education. The exceptions are some 120 rural non-state schools which, in most cases, are run by Catholic Orders. In the case of primary education, over 800 state schools have been established in country areas. These schools vary in size to suit local circumstances and on average the rural schools have about 90 pupils. Many of the rural schools, however, are much smaller and about one quarter of their number are one teacher schools with enrolments of 10 to 30 pupils. In contrast, primary schools in the metropolitan areas and provincial cities have an average size of 400.

The availability of rural primary schools is greatly enhanced by school transport services which are financed by the State Government and operated by private contractors. Although the precise history of these services has not been recorded, it is known that as early as 1915 contractors used horses and buggies to convey children to school.[4] The modern transport system was established in 1945 and has since expanded considerably. By 1977/78 there were 926 primary school bus services conveying over 33 000 students to and from school. The average daily distance covered by these bus routes was around 80 kilometres and the longest route was about 175 kilometres. Students eligible for school bus services are carried free of charge.* The school buses travel regular routes and students are collected at appointed places at set times. In cases where school buses are not in operation but licensed passenger services are available, the fares incurred are paid by the Department of Education provided the home is a certain distance** from the school. If bus services are not available and the only alternative is for parents or guardians to drive their children to school in a private vehicle, a conveyance allowance may be claimed. Where available in rural areas students may travel by rail free of charge.

At the secondary level, the Education Act of 1964 was responsible for significant changes by transferring year 8 students who previously attended primary schools to secondary schools. It also raised the school leaving age to fifteen. These changes, together with the desire of many parents to extend their children's educational opportunities as far as possible, led to a dramatic increase in high school enrolments in the period 1964-1970. During this time 25 new high schools were established in country areas and special arrangements were made to conduct secondary classes in 27 primary schools. Transport services to state secondary schools in Queensland increased accordingly and virtually trebled from 99 to 288 in the same period. By 1977/78 there were 302 secondary services carrying 25 220 pupils daily. The average distance covered by these routes is now slightly in excess of 100 kilometres daily. The longest route is about 240 kilometres.

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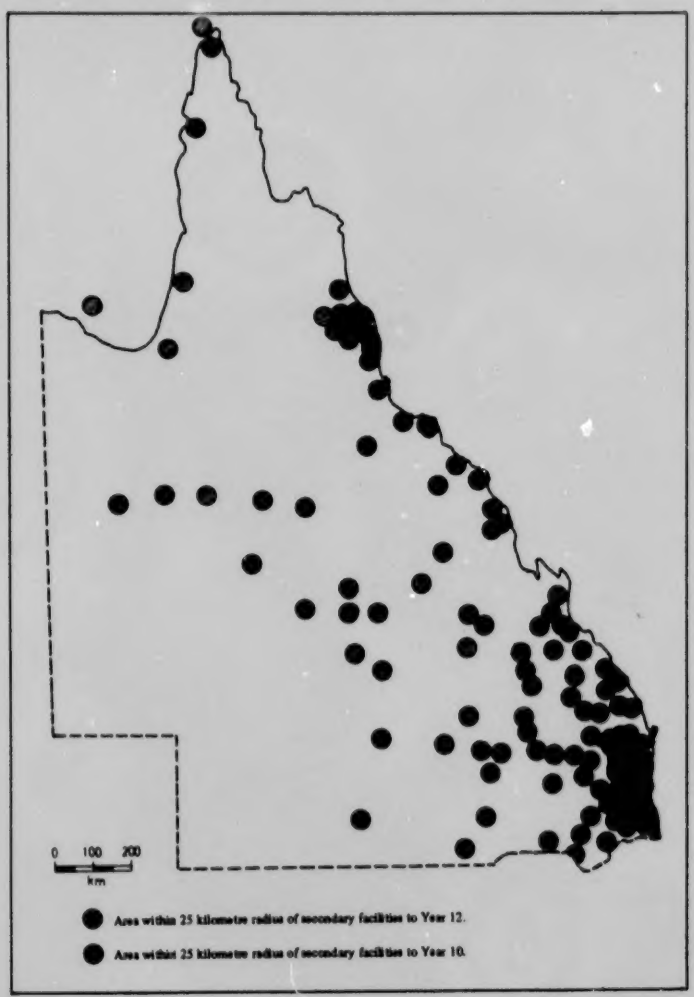
* Students under 10 years must live more than 3.2 kilometres from the school and other students must live more than 4.8 kilometres from the school.

** Same distances as eligibility for school bus services apply.

In rural towns in Queensland in 1978 there were some 50 high schools and 66 secondary departments. The locations of the secondary facilities and the adjacent areas, that the schools are most likely to serve, are indicated in Figure 2.3. Most secondary departments provide for children in years 8, 9 and 10, but six of them also provide for students to carry on to year 12. Like primary schools, rural secondary facilities tend to be much smaller than city high schools and as a result are not usually able to offer as wide a range of curriculum choices.

From this brief overview of state facilities in rural areas it is clear that the extensive provision of small primary schools, secondary departments and high schools in Queensland

Figure 2.3: Distribution of state secondary facilities in Queensland, 1978


0 100 200
km
Area within 25 kilometre radius of secondary facilities to Year 12.
Area within 25 kilometre radius of secondary facilities to Year 10.

Source: Adapted from G. T. McDonald, "Some Problems in Planning Education for Rural Areas", University of Queensland, January 1977.

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country areas, in conjunction with school transport services, enable most rural parents to send their children to school on a daily attendance basis. In many cases long journeys cause considerable inconvenience. It is estimated that 1 900 primary and 2 600 secondary students travel in excess of 32 kilometres each way, every school day.* Moreover, the inconvenience is not related solely to the length of the journey, as cognisance must also be taken of the fact that children from remote areas do not always travel to school over built up highways. They are likely to encounter unsealed gravel surfaces and creek crossings and these conditions add considerably to journey times. A survey[5] taken in the Darling Downs region in 1978 illustrates how slow school transport can be as services in that area had an average speed of only 40 kph (25 mph). Taken in conjunction with the length of some transport routes this shows that many students spend a considerable time on buses travelling to and from school.

Despite the extensive network of state schools which has evolved in rural areas, and despite the transportation difficulties which many rural students and their parents are prepared to tolerate, it is not possible to meet all needs. As consideration of the rural areas classified by Brown has already indicated, rural schools service the towns and adjacent grazing areas. However, in isolated outback areas such as the Gulf Country, and the Channel Country, it is not economically feasible to build primary schools in locations which ensure that the requirements of all families are met. Likewise, a full range of secondary education facilities cannot always be made available in more densely settled areas. Consequently the Department of Education has made alternative arrangements possible. Correspondence education is one of these alternatives.

Courses of primary correspondence for example, are available to children who are 5 years of age or older, and who are located some distance away from a school or school transport service**. In view of the decline in the rural population and the spread of school transport, it is not surprising that enrolments in these courses have decreased and are, in fact, now about one half of their level of 10 years ago. By 1978 there were about 1 600 students enrolled with the Primary Correspondence School. Lesson papers are distributed to students by mail and teachers make alterations to standard papers so that the needs of individual children are met. The cassette recorder scheme introduced in 1974 is proving beneficial to children in need of remedial teaching. This form of education requires the assistance of a supervisor and the role usually is taken by a parent, teacher or governess. As a supplement to primary correspondence about 30% of the students receive tuition through the School of the Air. Centres are located at Mt Isa, Cairns and Charleville and utilize the radio transmission facilities of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Through this communication channel School of the Air teachers are able to make voice contact with groups of remote children and are able to give assistance to the children and their supervisors. Secondary correspondence lessons are also available to students who have completed their primary schooling and who wish to study courses either on a full-time or part-time basis, but because of the relatively small number of full-time students, School of the Air facilities have not been established for secondary correspondence. In 1978 there were less than 250 full-time students enrolled.

THE NEED FOR LIVING AWAY FROM HOME FACILITIES

The anxiety of many rural parents over the education of their children often leads them to adopt the remaining educational alternative — living away from home. Typically these

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* Such students would be eligible for the state Remote Area Allowance if they chose to live away from home.

**Children under 10 years must live *over* 3.2 kilometres from the local state school or more than 1.6 kilometres from a school transport service; and children 10 years or older must live *over* 4.8 kilometres from the local state school or more than 3.2 kilometres from a school transport service.

parents are too far from schools or school transport services for children to attend on a daily basis and they may find travel inconvenient or unsuitable because of poor roads or lengthy journeys. They could also require a specific secondary curriculum or year level which is unavailable at a secondary school that is within reach. In excess of 4 000 children whose homes are in isolated areas of Queensland, live away from the permanent family residence to attend a school on a daily basis.

For families in these situations, both the State and Commonwealth Governments provide a range of allowances which assist with the financial burden of accommodating their children away from home. Details of the benefits and criteria for eligibility of these various allowance schemes are set out in Appendix 2. In brief however, the most frequently issued state benefit is the Remote Area Allowance which is not means-tested. Benefits in the range of $240 to $375 per student child per annum were paid in 1978. As well, students in years 11 and 12 may apply for a competitive scholarship which is means-tested but may pay a benefit as high as $1 000 per annum. The Commonwealth allowances tend to be more stringent than those of the State, but the benefits extend to children in all year levels. The Commonwealth boarding allowance pays a basic benefit of $500 per student per annum which is not subject to a means test. Further allowances to alleviate hardship are available for families on very low incomes.

When account is taken of both the supply of educational facilities and services in rural areas and the demand for these services, the position may be summarised in the following way. Firstly, demographic factors make it difficult to establish a comprehensive network of schools in the rural areas of the State. Because of the pattern of settlement numerous rural schools are required and by city standards they cater for quite small enrolments. Due to the limitations of their size they are often unable to offer a full range of educational facilities to suit requirements of all families in small rural communities. Secondly, the viability of rural schools has been enhanced by extending their catchment areas through the use of transport arrangements geared to the specific requirements of school children. Nevertheless, the distances which have to be overcome in rural Queensland are so vast that not all families can gain daily access to schools which meet their requirements. Fortunately, only a minority of families are in these very isolated circumstances. Thirdly, the State Government in Queensland is the predominant supplier of facilities and services for schooling in rural areas. It has adopted a range of educational alternatives to cater for children who can attend school daily, and those who cannot.

Although both the State and Commonwealth Governments provide financial support for the families of children who live away from home, the actual accommodation facilities for them are supplied by private organisations. The historical development and present availability of these facilities are discussed in the next chapter.

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3. Marsden, D. University of Queensland, 1972. Also in *"Small Towns are Ailing"*, The Sunday Mail, September 10th, 1972.
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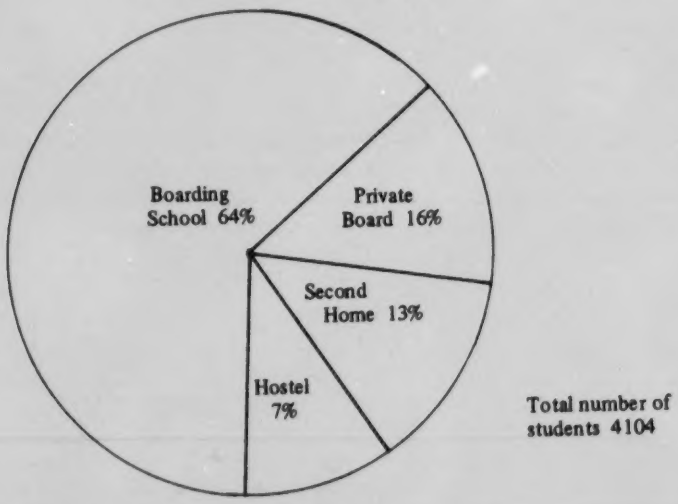
CHAPTER III

LIVING AWAY FROM HOME FACILITIES FOR ISOLATED STUDENTS IN QUEENSLAND

The previous chapter described the educational facilities available to rural families and concluded that there were many children, who, for reasons of isolation, were unable to attend school daily. These children are isolated because of the sheer physical distance which separates them from schools or school transport services, and because travel to and from a school would involve long journeys.

Although correspondence lessons are available to primary and secondary students, a majority of isolated parents take advantage of State and Commonwealth government assistance to send their children away from home for at least some of their schooling*. Once parents decide to send one or more of their children away from home, they are forced to consider the relative merits of various forms of living away from home arrangements such as boarding school, student hostel and private board. Another alternative which assists in keeping the children together is for one of the parents, usually the mother, to set up a second home in a nearby town with suitable education facilities. The demand for each alternative as assessed from available lists in 1977 is set out in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Demand for living away from home arrangements, 1977



* Information about financial assistance from the State or Commonwealth is set out in Appendix 2.

While it would have been desirable to survey and analyse all four alternatives, it was clear that the timetable for the study would not have permitted the investigation and analysis necessary. Moreover, the approach to the study called for the identification of the individual boarding units in question, the design and administration of a questionnaire, analysis of the information obtained and follow-up visits. Compared with boarding schools and hostels, the number and location of second homes and private homes accepting student boarders were both much more numerous and very widely scattered. There were for example, about 200 second homes compared with 20 hostels. The amount of extra time involved in sampling and visiting such large numbers did not seem to warrant delaying the study. Notwithstanding, a range of information on the second home and private boarding situations was obtained from the Parents Questionnaire and is discussed in Chapters IV and V.

It is clear from the analysis of the data provided by the Parents Questionnaire that some 70% of isolated students who live away from home attend boarding schools and hostels. This chapter examines the historical development of these facilities and briefly assesses their current circumstances. A review of existing literature on living away from home facilities for rural children was not illuminating and illustrated the necessity for sound research in the area. The Senate Committee on Education (1976) saw a need to maintain boarding facilities for isolated students and this was supported by those boarding schools and hostels which were finding it difficult to maintain their viability.

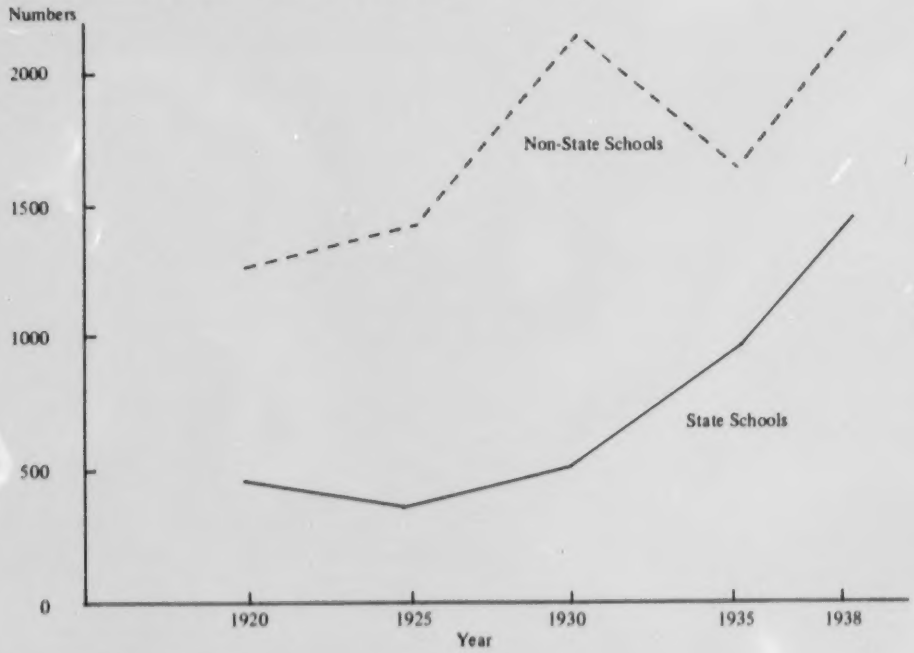
THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS

The development of non-government schools in Queensland was contingent on the passage of the *"Grammar Schools Act"* soon after Queensland became a separate colony in 1859. It provided, inter alia, for the establishment and subsidisation of private secondary schools in towns where the population was prepared to meet the financial and non-financial requirements of the Act.[1] The first school was not founded until 1863. At the time there were only about 28 000 people in Queensland and they were spread over some 1.75 million square kilometres with more than half living in the south-east corner.[2] By 1892 however, separate Grammar schools had been established for both sexes in Ipswich, Brisbane, Maryborough and Rockhampton and for boys only at Toowoomba and Townsville.[3] The schools became boarding schools through necessity because of the vast distances and general lack of secondary education facilities in Queensland.[4] Initially they remained the preserve of the wealthy class,[5] but by the 1890's the schools were finding support amongst the middle classes in the developing urban areas and the percentage of boarders fell away to about 20% of the total enrolment in 1901 when there were only 161 boarders present.[6]

In 1900 an amendment to the Scholarship Regulations extended the practice of awarding state scholarships for secondary education to include schools *'approved'* by the Education Department for this purpose. The allowance was paid direct to the school at which the scholarship holder pursued his education and in effect recompensed the school for educating children on behalf of the State. The greatest benefit of this new policy accrued to catholic schools and in the period 1900-1912[7] various catholic orders established schools in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Yeppoon and Charters Towers, many of which are still operating as boarding schools today. By 1919 there were 10 grammar schools, 23 *'approved'* church and private schools, 10 high schools and 8 secondary departments providing secondary education in Queensland. The private school system was a very important component in Queensland education at this time providing 75% of all year 10 passes and 80% of all year 12 passes in 1919.[8]

Figure 3.2 shows the propensity of state scholarship holders to attend non-state schools during the years 1920-38. This period also saw the advent of the *'great depression'* and the application of severe financial stringency in respect of education. The overall budget for education was cut, teachers' salaries reduced, building programs curtailed and the number of available scholarships decreased. The effects of the depression were reflected particularly in the enrolment of scholarship holders at the fee paying non-state schools which declined by nearly 50% between 1930 and 1932. By comparison the enrolment of scholarship holders at state schools fell by only about half this percentage. This would seem to indicate the importance to private schools of both the economic situation and the ability of governments to provide some form of financial assistance.

Figure 3.2: Location of state scholarship holders, boys[a], 1920–38



[a] Figures for girls not available

Source: Adapted from R. Goodman, Secondary Education in Queensland, 1860–1960, Canberra, ANU Press, 1968, p. 272.

Although the economic problems of the 1930's favoured the development of state high schools at the expense of non-state schools, the general lack of funds for education precluded significant changes in the status quo. Indeed most educational services had to be curtailed and secondary education suffered in particular. As a result, by 1939, only 13% of the children of high school age were actually attending secondary school full-time compared with 17% in 1921. This meant that for the great majority of children in Queensland, full-time schooling ceased at the age of fourteen.[9]

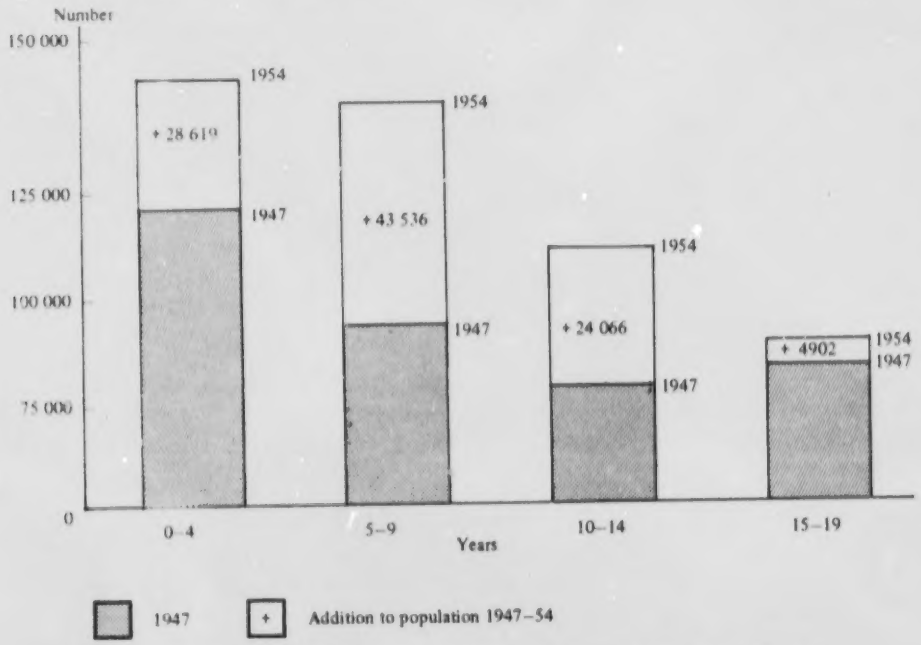
World War II set back a further generation of Queensland students as many sacrifices had to be made to assist the war effort. By 1942/43 expenditure on education had decreased

to 5 % of the State Budget and for the war years as a whole, secondary education received less than 1 % of the State's total revenue. Not surprisingly the distribution of pupils between the state and non-state secondary schools varied little during 1939-45 with non-state enrolments averaging around 55 % of total secondary enrolments.

In the immediate post-war years, which was a period of re-construction for numerous public services, education had a relatively low priority in State government expenditure. However by 1950, education had certainly become a matter of concern and featured as an election issue. Consequently, when the government at that time was returned to power, it allocated a record amount of its budget to education. Nevertheless, by modern standards the proportion set aside for secondary education was relatively meagre and only about 8 % of the available education funds went to this level of education.

In contrast to the level of funding available, the demand for secondary education was increasing. In 1951 almost 9 000 students presented themselves for the Scholarship Examination which regulated entry to secondary schools. Students who passed this examination did not have to pay fees at state secondary schools. This number represented a threefold increase on pre-war figures. The prospect of a new wave of students of secondary school age was confirmed by the population census in 1954, which showed that the total population had grown by 19 % during the intercensal period 1947-54. Moreover it confirmed a major shift in the age distribution in that 37 % of Queensland's population was then under twenty. The dramatic increase in school and pre-school age groups is illustrated in Figure 3.3

Figure 3.3: Age distribution of population, Queensland, 1947–1954



Source: Adapted from R. Goodman, "Secondary Education in Queensland, 1860–1960", Canberra, ANU Press, 1968, p. 342.

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The early 1960's brought a further increase in demand for secondary education due, at least in part, to the technological developments nurtured by the space race between the USA and the USSR. Figure 3.4 illustrates the escalation in total secondary enrolments for the period 1951-61 and also shows the initiative in secondary education finally passing to the state schools. Total enrolments increased by a factor of four in this period and 70% of each age group began to reach year 10 compared with only 26% ten years previously.

Figure 3.4: Percentage of students enrolled in state, grammar, and private secondary schools, 1951 and 1961

The demand for accommodation in secondary schools was further aggravated by the Education Act of 1964 which raised the school leaving age to fifteen and transferred children from primary school to secondary school at the end of year 7 without a qualifying exam. These provisions had an immediate impact on secondary enrolments and by 1970 total enrolments had risen to 115 937, an increase of around 120% on 1961 figures. This increase posed heavy financial problems for the non-state schools particularly for the catholic schools which had not previously been geared to secondary education in any great way. According to Goodman,[10] the non-state schools were forced to build new classrooms and employ more teachers to cater for the increased demand for education. A natural outcome of finding funds to meet debt repayments, etc., was increased fees. This could have resulted in some families transferring to the free state high schools, for in the period 1961-1978, the private sector's share of total secondary enrolments fell from about 33% to 27%. Notwithstanding actual enrolments in non-state secondary schools increased by nearly 22 000 in this period and totalled 39 387 in 1978.[11] Some 24 300 of these pupils were enrolled in schools catering for boarders and for these schools, the boarding component remained significant at around 37% (approx. 9 000) of their total enrolments.

It is clear from this historical account that non-state schools have played an important role in the development of secondary education in Queensland and that there has been a traditional interdependence between isolated families and boarding schools. This interdependence began to weaken in the late 1960's when the State Government established 25 new high schools and 27 secondary departments in country areas in response to demand for local schools in those areas. There was also an allied increase in secondary school transport services and in the period 1964-70 they virtually trebled from 99 to 288. The

provision and extension of free bus services also served to reduce the enrolment at student hostels for it removed the need for some students to live away from home in order to attend their closest state high school.

The increased provision of educational services for rural students should not in itself have adversely affected boarding schools for it has already been shown that total enrolments in non-state schools increased substantially in recent years and by 1978 was steady at around 27% of total secondary enrolments. No comparative figures were available for boarders as the earliest collected data dated only from 1970. The State was not nearly so active in the period 1970-78 with only 14 new high schools and 5 secondary departments being established in country areas — many of these were associated with new mining developments and a new approach to aboriginal education. Some of the new high schools had also previously existed as secondary departments.

Despite the relative stability in the number of state schools in recent years, total boarding enrolments in non-state schools have fallen from around 9 500 in 1970 to approximately 8 000 in 1978.* One consequence of this decline is that some boarding schools are in severe financial trouble and several catholic schools have as a result closed their boarding wings. Reasons for this decline in viability are offered in the next section of this chapter together with a review of existing literature on living away from home facilities for isolated students.

The development of student hostels in Queensland paralleled that of boarding schools in many respects but their aim was to provide cheap accommodation for isolated students who wanted to attend school daily but could not afford boarding school. Most were established in country areas by community agencies as a service to the surrounding rural community. The first hostel was founded at Charleville in 1919 by the Anglican Bush Brotherhood and another was opened at Warwick in 1926 by the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA). Other organisations to operate hostels were the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and the Young Women's Christian Association.

The Queensland Government has always recognised the need for student hostels in rural areas where there is an appropriate demand but has been adamant that local responsibility and supervision were essential for their operation. Consequently the Government has been opposed to the establishment of state hostels but has provided financial assistance to approved organisations for capital and maintenance purposes since 1945. It is understood that the number of student hostels in Queensland peaked around 1960 but then declined significantly as a result of increased Government provision of educational facilities in rural areas. No actual figures are available on the extent of the decline but the QCWA which controlled 18 hostels in 1963 had only 5 left by 1978. This represents a decline of 72% in 15 years or about one hostel per year. The total number of student hostels in Queensland at the end of 1977 was 20 and one of these did not re-open in 1978.

BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS IN 1979

At the beginning of 1979 there were 50 non-government boarding schools** and 19 hostels providing students with nearly 10 000 beds to facilitate daily attendance at schools away from home. The location of these institutions is given in Figures 3.5 and 3.6 respectively.

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* See Table 6.1 for more precise details

** For purpose of this study the state-run agricultural colleges have not been included.

Figure 3.5 shows that the majority of schools and the majority of boarding places are found in the south-east corner of the State bounded by the Darling Downs and the coastline. The provincial boarding schools are for the most part located on, or at the end of the main railway lines servicing central and north-west Queensland. They are also relatively close to airports at Cairns, Rockhampton and Townsville. In contrast, the five small catholic convents which accept boarders and the student hostels, are situated in the more remote areas of the State.

Details of each school's affiliations, bed capacity and year of establishment are summarised in Tables 3.1 to 3.3. There are 24 catholic schools and 26 other schools classified for this report as independent schools. All but 8 of the schools provide full secondary facilities to year 12. The tables show that there are 15 boys schools, 22 girls schools and 13 co-educational schools. In the catholic system only the small primary convents provide co-educational boarding facilities but in the independent system *'co-education'* is more popular. It has resulted in part from the amalgamation of brother and sister schools and partly from boys schools attempting to increase their viability by extending their range of clientele. Additional data on boarding schools are provided in Chapters VI and VII.

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Figure 3.5: Location of non-government boarding schools in Queensland, 1979

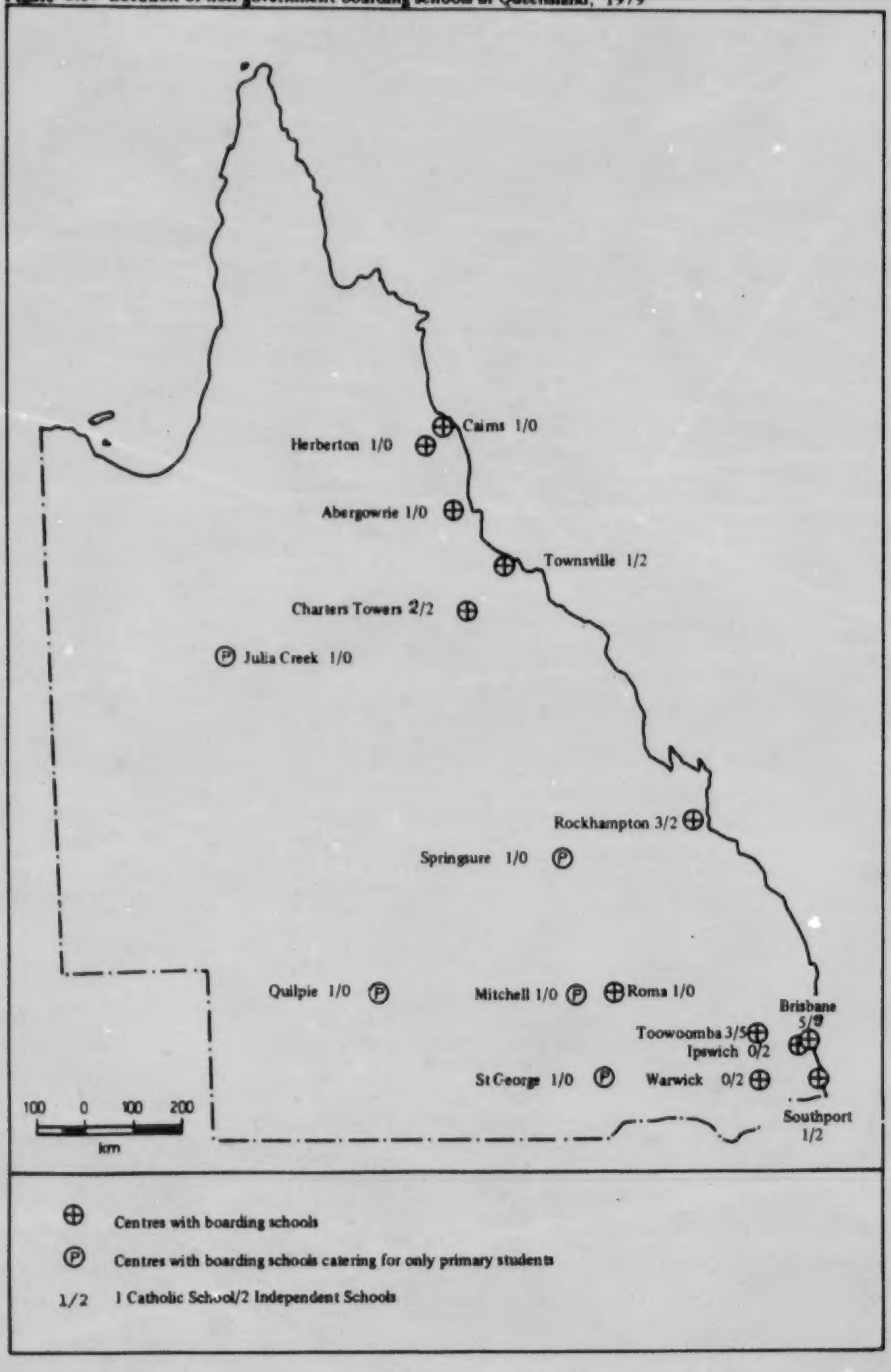

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Table 3.1: Primary convents with boarding facilities by religious order, location, boarding capacity and year of establishment, 1979

School[a]	*Boarding capacity*	*Year established*
O.L.S.H., Springsure	24	1926
St Finbarr's, Quilpie	30	1950
St Joseph's, Julia Creek	32	1955
St Patrick's, Mitchell	16	1925
St Patrick's, St George	25	1933
Total	127	

[a] These schools are run principally by the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St Joseph on behalf of the parish or diocese which owns the particular school. All are co-educational.

Table 3.2: Catholic boarding schools in Queensland by religious order, location, boarding capacity, sex of boarder and year of establishment, 1979

Order	*School*	*Boarding capacity*[a]	*Sex*	*Year established*
Christian Brothers	Nudgee Junior (primary only)	123	M	1938
	St Joseph's College, Nudgee	444	M	1891
	Mt Carmel, Charters Towers	290	M	1902
	St Teresa's, Abergowrie	220	M	1934
	St Brendan's, Yeppoon	312	M	1940
Marist Brothers	Marist Brothers, Ashgrove	300	M	1940
	St Augustine's, Cairns[b]	300	M	1930
Sacred Heart Fathers	Downlands College, Toowoomba	287	M	1931
Sisters of Mercy	St John's, Roma[b]	18	F	1942
	St Patrick's, Townsville	165	F	1904
	Mt St Bernard's, Herberton	198	F	1921
	Range Convent, Rockhampton	184	F	1896
	St Saviour's, Toowoomba[b]	74	F	1912
	Star of the Sea, Southport	64	F	1901
Presentation Sisters	St Ursula's, Yeppoon	165	F	1917
Ursuline Sisters	St Ursula's, Toowoomba	175	F	1931
Sisters of the Good Samaritan	St Mary's, Charters Towers	105	F	1891
	Lourdes Hill, Brisbane	114	F	1916
Sisters of the Sacred Heart	Stuartholme, Brisbane	92	F	1920
	Total	3 630		

[a] Based on Schools Commission statistical survey data, 1974.

[b] School is run on behalf of the diocese by this order.

Note: According to the Queensland Catholic Education Office, a Christian Brothers boarding school at Gympie operated until the end of 1978 and then closed down; the questionnaire submitted to the Schools Commission in 1976 however excluded any mention of boarders and it was presumed closed to boarders then. This school was not included in the overall analysis.

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Table 3.3: Independent boarding schools in Queensland by affiliation, location, boarding capacity, sex of boarder and year of establishment, 1979.

Affiliation	*School*	*Boarding capacity*[a]	*Sex*	*Year established*
Church of England	Church of England Grammar School (Brisbane)	275	M	1912
	The Southport School (Southport)	340	M	1901
	Glennie (Toowoomba)	126	F	1908
	St Anne's (Townsville)	240	F	1917
	St Hilda's (Southport)	265	F	1912
	St Margaret's (Brisbane)	162	F	1895
	All Souls' /St Gabriel's (Charters Towers)	570	Co-ed	1920
	Slade (Warwick)	117	Co-ed	1926
	Churchie Prep. (Toowoomba)	118	Co-ed	1911
Non-Denominational	Brisbane Boys' Grammar	156	M	1869
	Ipswich Boys' Grammar	200	M	1863
	Townsville Grammar School	150	M	1888
	Toowoomba Grammar School	350	M	1877
	Brisbane Girls' Grammar	80	F	1875
	Rockhampton Girls' Grammar	134	F	1892
	Ipswich Girls' Grammar	160	F	1892
	Rockhampton Boys' Grammar	350	Co-ed	1881
PMSA	Brisbane Boys' College (Brisbane)	180	M	1902
	Somerville (Brisbane)	92	F	1899
	Clayfield Girls' College (Brisbane)	110	F	1931
	Moreton Bay College (Brisbane)[b]	110	F	1901
	Blackthorn (Charters Towers)[b]	290	Co-ed	1919
Presbyterian	Fairholme (Toowoomba)	208	F	1917
	Scots /P.G.S. (Warwick)	300	Co-ed	1919
Lutheran	St Peter's (Brisbane)	375	Co-ed	1945
	Concordia (Toowoomba)	186	Co-ed	1946
	Total	5 644		

[a] Based on Schools Commission statistical survey data, 1974.

[b] These schools became totally independent of the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association in 1979.

Figure 3.6 shows the location of the State's 19 student hostels together with the level of education facilities available in the centres. Most are situated west of the Dividing Range in fairly isolated situations. Four of the hostels are in centres which only have primary school facilities and a further six hostels are in locations in which schools provide secondary facilities in years 8 to 10. The remaining hostels with access to full secondary facilities are generally found in large rural service towns like Charleville and Longreach. As a consequence hostels range in size from a capacity of 11 at Thargomindah to 60 at Emerald. Summary data are provided in Table 3.4. Average hostel capacity is 36 but in recent years most have had problems recruiting enough boarders to remain viable.

Hostels are run, in the main, by the Queensland Country Women's Association (5), local Authority Councils (5) and religious organisations (6). Recently however, three hostels have been organised by Parents Committees and these are proving quite successful. In two of the three cases, the parents took over in order to keep the hostels open after the traditional sponsoring bodies had decided to withdraw. All the hostels, except Mt Isa, provide accommodation for both males and females. Mt Isa (girls only) and Malanda, are part of mission activities conducted by various churches for aborigines. The Australian Inland Mission also manages hostels at Coen and Normanton, which service both whites and aboriginals. Additional data on student hostels are provided in Chapter VIII.

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Figure 3.6: Location of hostels for isolated children in Queensland, 1979

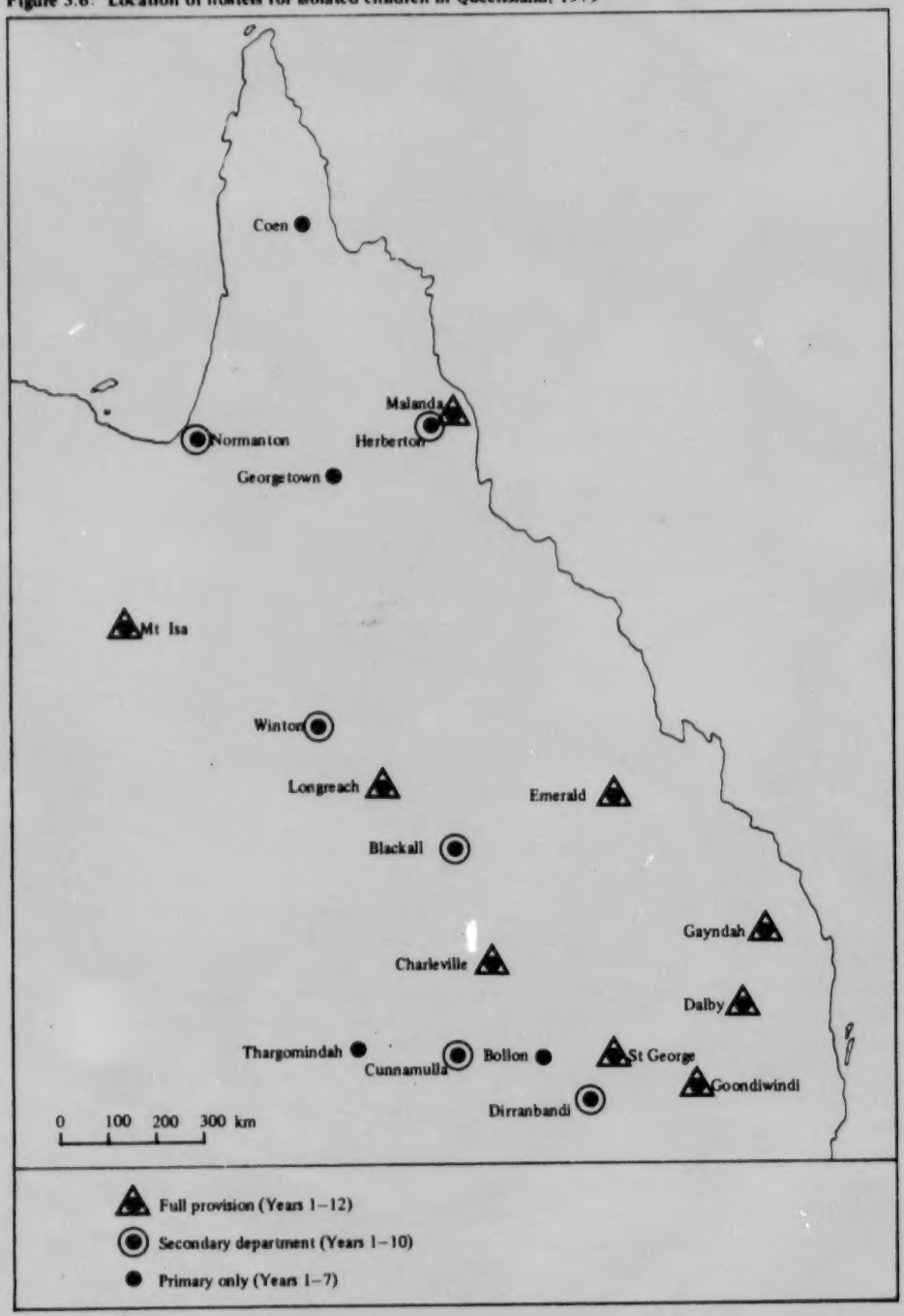

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Table 3.4: Student Hostels in Queensland by sponsoring body, location, capacity and year of establishment, 1979

Sponsoring body	*Hostel location*	*Capacity*	*Year established*
QCWA	Dalby	30	1957
	Gayndah	32	1959
	Emerald	60	1962
	Goondiwindi	53	1957
	Thargomindah	11	1963
Shire Council	Blackall	50	1961
	Georgetown	48	1969
	Cunnamulla	50	1966
	Winton	48	1977
	Longreach	50	1961
Parents	St George	29	1952
	Bollon	22	1968
	Dirranbandi	14	1975
Church	Charleville	25	1919
	Herberton	55[a]	1926
	Mt Isa	18	1973
	Malanda	34	1969
	Normanton	24	1973
	Coen	24	1958
	Total	677	

[a]Herberton's capacity was reduced from 126 to 55 in 1979.

RECENT PROBLEMS OF BOARDING SCHOOLS AND HOSTELS

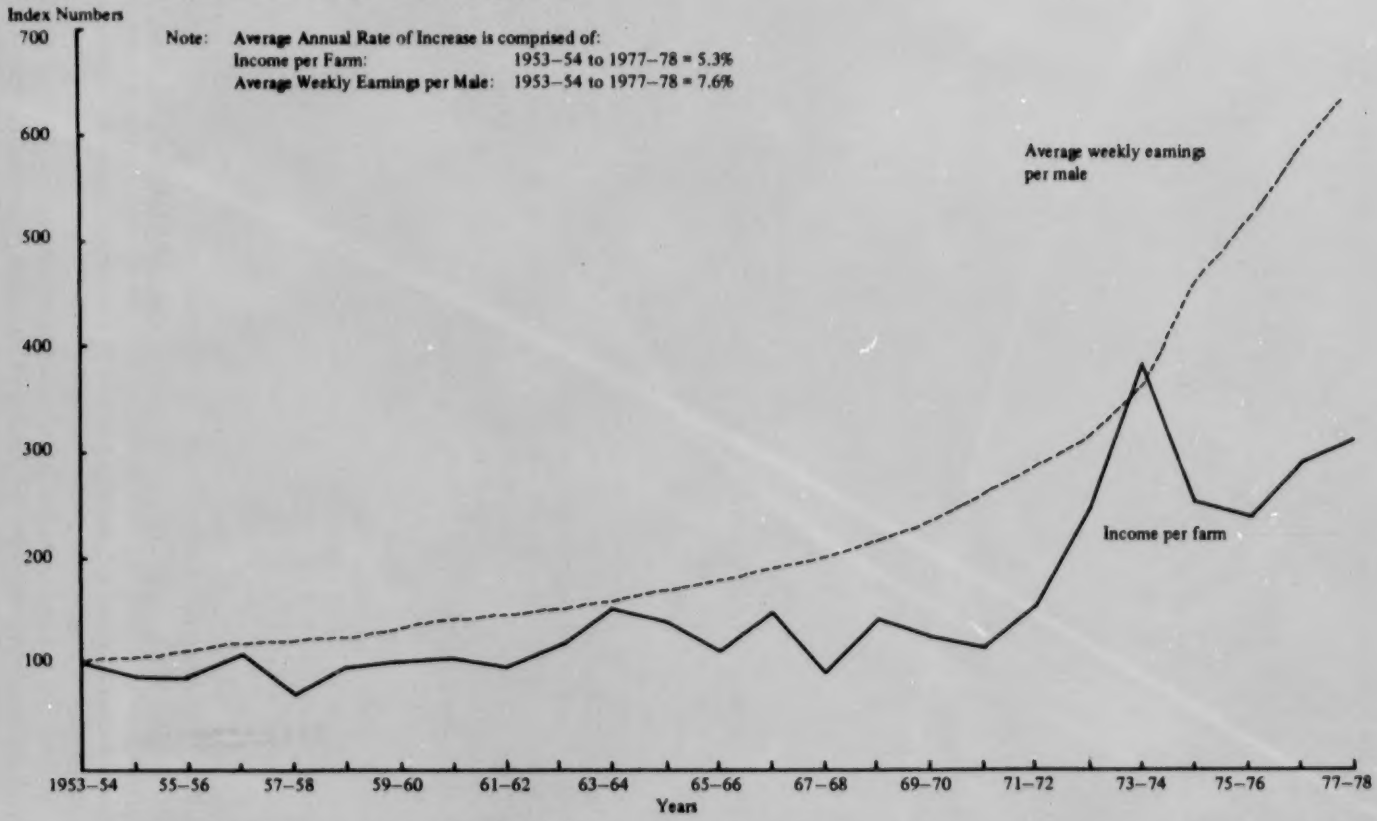
A number of factors seem to have mitigated against the viability of boarding schools and hostels in recent years. They include the increased provision of state government facilities in rural areas, population shifts and an extended rural depression which has paralleled a period of urban inflation and increased costs and fees for boarders.

The spread of state schools and school transport services has already been discussed in detail, as has the drift of Queensland's rural population to larger centres. Another factor which affected Queensland's boarding schools resulted from Papua New Guinea (PNG) gaining Self-government in December 1973, and Independence in 1975. Effectively these events displaced thousands of expatriate Australian families who previously looked to Queensland boarding schools for their children's education.

The 1971 Australian Census indicated that there were more than 50 000 non-indigenous persons in Papua New Guinea. This number declined rapidly as preparations for self-government began. No actual figures for non-indigenous children attending boarding schools in Queensland are available, but a minimum figure of at least 2 000 was suggested by the PNG Consulate in Brisbane for children attending boarding schools throughout Australia. Moreover they also advised that prior to 1973, a total of 1 600-1 800 indigenous children had over a number of years been provided with a boarding school education in Queensland by the Australian Administration. Thus although no firm annual figures are available it may be deduced that by 1976 the once significant flow of PNG boarders had been greatly reduced. At the time of writing, for example, only 500 Australians remained on the PNG Public Service payroll, and most indigenous students are now educated at home. Of the 19 boarding schools visited in Queensland in 1978 by the research team, the total enrolment from Papua New Guinea would not have exceeded 200.

The PNG Department of the Public Services Commission has produced rather similar figures. It indicated that there were 135 children of expatriate government officers attending

Figure 3.7: Income per farm and average weekly earnings per male



Source: B.A.E. Rural Economic Analysis Section, Canberra, 1979.

boarding schools in Queensland in 1978 and that there was probably at least an equal number from the private sector of the expatriate community.

A further problem relates to the rural depression which has existed in recent years alongside urban inflation and rising costs. The resultant economic squeeze has meant that rural parents are less able to afford to send their children away to boarding schools or hostels, thus contributing to the overall decline in enrolments. For boarding institutions, the decreasing demand and rising costs have inevitably led to higher fees which may then further erode their boarding numbers. A number of institutions adopted a range of devices to retain their boarders and their viability. They included scholarships and bursaries, family fee concessions, fee increases below the rate of inflation and the acceptance of bad debts accruing from late payment or non-payment of fees. As a result of income foregone in this manner and rising costs, particularly teachers' salaries, many boarding schools have experienced financial problems.

The extent to which rural incomes have declined in relation to average weekly earnings of all Australian males is illustrated in Figure 3.7. With one exception, viz. 1973/74 when boarding schools had very strong enrolments, average farm income has been well below average male weekly earnings.

The end result of the decline in rural enrolments has varied. For many student hostels and some boarding schools it has meant closure. For the surviving boarding schools it has meant decreased dependence on rural boarders and a switch in emphasis to *'other'* boarders and to *'day school'* pupils. In 1974, for example, Queensland boarding schools indicated [12] that 44% of boarders attended for reasons of isolation. Visits to boarding schools in 1978 revealed that the percentage of boarders from isolated areas had dropped to around 33% and that an increasing number of boarders were now coming from broken homes or a difficult family situation. Despite all these recent setbacks very little research seems to have been undertaken to establish the extent of the problems in boarding institutions or to formulate some acceptable solutions.

A REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

A critical review of existing literature revealed an extensive list of reports and journal articles pertaining to rural education, but very few sources of information on living away from home facilities for isolated children. Only two reports reviewed were relevant. Both were published by the South Australian Council for Educational Planning and Research (SACFEPAR) under the Schools Commission's sponsorship. These were the report on *'Residential Accommodation for Secondary Students'*[13] published in 1975 and *'A Survey of Boarding Schools in Australia'*[14] published in 1976.

The report on residential accommodation attempted to:

(a) determine the types of residential accommodation available for school children in Australia, how they were administered and how much they cost to run;
(b) establish the advantages and disadvantages of these institutions together with their associated problems;
(c) define the policies of the various State Education Departments to residential accommodation; and
(d) make positive recommendations to the Schools Commission regarding feasible alternatives and modes of assistance.

The study included visits to 'selected schools and hostels in Queensland'. In actual fact, however, no hostels were visited and all the boarding schools examined were independent schools in the south-east corner of the State. No catholic schools were visited at all. It is

suggested therefore that the work done in Queensland (6 schools out of 61 boarding schools) was unrepresentative and this in turn must cast doubt on the validity of the study's Queensland findings. Questionnaires were apparently sent to 8 of Queensland's hostels all of which were operated by the QCWA. It seems that the research team were unaware of any other sponsoring body e.g. parents organisations, local authorities and church groups.

The report *'A Survey of Boarding Schools in Australia'* provided a summary of the information obtained from SACFEPAR's national questionnaire survey[15] of all non-government boarding schools in November 1976.

The survey sought to identify the following factors:

(a) the trends in boarding school enrolments;
(b) the locational differences in enrolment trends;
(c) the increases in fees charged for boarding and tuition in recent years;
(d) points of enrolment and departure in boarding schools;
(e) changes in the ratio of day and boarding enrolments; and
(f) the origin of boarders and trends in enrolments from rural areas.

The survey results are aggregated in tabular form by factor and by state, and occupy the bulk of the report. No conclusions were drawn and the authors merely indicated that *"the survey should be used as an indicator to direct answers to (certain) questions"* and as *"a background of knowledge"*[16] for objective discussions.

SACFEPAR's work was discussed at the National Council Independent Schools (NCIS) boarding school seminar in Canberra in May 1977. It is worth noting that a paper which circulated after the seminar, agreed with the basic premise that boarding schools were experiencing growing problems.[17] It was however generally critical of the report's strategy and lack of analytical comment. The paper was presented by Mr G.A. Renney and some of his comments are cited below:

(a) *"the South Australia survey is limited by the size and, in some cases, the unrepresentative nature of the sample"*;
(b) *"the nature of the information is limited"*; *"at best the figures indicate general tendencies rather than positive trends"*;
(c) one qualifying factor not considered is *"the great variation in the circumstances which prevail in different parts of Australia"*;
(d) *"there is also a need to investigate a number of sociological questions relating to parental expectations and the reasons why children are sent to boarding school"*; and
(e) *"clearly isolation is more than geographical and the term needs to be analysed and clearly stated"*.

Renney concluded by suggesting a number of areas in need of further discussion and investigation. His comments carry considerable importance and for this reason are summarised below.[18]

(i) Are the present boarding schools meeting the needs of students?
(ii) Is the present boarding school environment conducive to normal emotional and social development?
(iii) Is the definition of *"isolated children"* under the Commonwealth Assistance Scheme too narrow and restrictive in that it discriminates against low and middle income rural families in terms of the possibility of a boarding school education?
(iv) Are the Commonwealth and State Governments fully aware of the extent and nature of the welfare work carried on in boarding schools?
(v) Is the *"traditional"* style boarding house the most appropriate for the needs of the children and for the future viability of the schools?

(vi) Should government money be directed toward upgrading and developing boarding schools and hostels?

(vii) Should the boarding schools themselves give more thought to the possibility of rationalising some of their competing numbers?

(viii) Wouldn't it be unwise for governments to invest enormous capital recurrent expenditure on the development of hostels and local schools when there are empty beds in boarding schools?

(ix) If governments are prepared to assist students who need residential accommodation what is the most appropriate method of providing that assistance?

(x) What is the most appropriate method of determining and distributing per capita grants and direct grants for capital works?

Clearly, as a result of his review of the SACFEPAR report, Renney has produced an extensive list of pertinent questions which influence any further analysis. However, for several reasons, they are not easy questions to answer. One of the major stumbling blocks in this regard is a deficiency of data. It would be an ambitious project that set out to gather all of the data needed to analyse in detail the full range of complex issues that he has raised. Accordingly this study has concentrated on securing a sound data base from surveys of isolated families, boarding schools, and hostel establishments. Thus, a deliberate attempt has been made to obtain information from both sides of the market for student accommodation. On the one hand, the matter of student and family needs has been examined through the distribution of a questionnaire to the parents of children. On the other hand, data has also been gathered about the operation of schools and hostels through questionnaires, and by direct observation as well. Results of these surveys are reported in Chapters IV to VIII.

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15 *National Boarding School Survey*, November 1976, authorised by the National Council of Independent Schools (NCIS) and funded by the Australian Schools Commission.
16 *A Survey of Boarding Schools in Australia*, op. cit., p. 9.
17 Renney, G.A.W., *Consideration and Analysis of the Survey on Boarding Schools*: a paper presented to the NCIS Boarding School Seminar, Canberra, May 1977.
18 Renney, G.A.W., op. cit.

Chapter IV

FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

Consideration of the background information and historical reviews which have been outlined in previous chapters obviously leads to certain expectations about data collected from both the users and suppliers of student accommodation. As the previous chapter indicated, on the supply side the number of students accommodated at both boarding schools and hostels is declining, and on present indications, seems unlikely to increase. Moreover, a general decline in the quality of accommodation and services seems highly likely, given that student accommodation is becoming more costly to provide. Data about these supply issues are dealt with in subsequent chapters.

As far as the demand for accommodation is concerned, Chapter II has shown that living away from home facilities are needed for only a small proportion of isolated students. An examination of demographic factors and the pattern of establishment of state schools lead to the view that families who send their children away from home for educational reasons live considerable distances from schools and towns. Moreover the wide geographical spread of primary facilities, coupled with the fact that enrolments in primary correspondence lessons are considerably greater than in secondary correspondence, suggests that older children are more likely to live away from home. As well, the costs of accommodating members of a family away from their permanent domicile could indicate that the poor are disadvantaged. Data related to the need for living away from home (LAFH) facilities, which were obtained from questionnaires distributed to certain isolated families, are examined in this chapter. These questionnaire data also provide the basis for a discussion of factors related to the choice of education arrangements and particular facilities which occurs in Chapter V.

The main intention of the survey questionnaire was to obtain biographical and attitudinal data about isolated families who may need LAFH facilities for their school-age children. Consequently, the target population for the questionnaire was very restricted. It excluded families who have daily access to schools, but for reasons other than isolation, elect to have children live away from home, particularly in boarding schools. Moreover, the target population was relatively small in number because, as previously discussed, only a small proportion of children in the State are without daily access to schools.

Families included in the study may be conveniently described in terms of Brown's[1] classification of rural settlements. However, in this instance, two of Brown's four categories, rural service towns and mining towns, do not require separation. The three categories to be considered are the outback, serviced grazing areas, and the towns. Clearly, families in what Brown defined as the outback, because of their very isolated circumstances, were included in the target population if they had children of school age. These families were identified because they have children living away from home and were receiving at least one form of government allowance, or because they had children enrolled in correspondence education. Families using correspondence were of interest in the study because living away from home

was an alternative to the type of education which they had chosen. Moreover, these families were in circumstances which may have led them to use LAFH facilities at some stage in the education of their children.

Many families in serviced grazing areas were also asked to complete the questionnaire. Again these families were identified because they had one or more of their children living away from home or using correspondence lessons. However in this area, because of identification problems, it was not possible to survey an additional group of potential users of LAFH facilities. These were families who have children attending school daily by undertaking relatively long journeys. It was recognised that a number of such families may encounter a need for LAFH facilities as their children progress through to higher educational levels. Questionnaires were also sent to some families in the towns as they had children of secondary age who did not have daily access to a school which offered the level of education they needed. Once again it was not possible to identify certain other potential user families whose children would eventually reach levels of education that were not readily available locally.

In practice, sampling procedures were not used to distribute the questionnaires. An attempt was made to issue a questionnaire to each isolated family who had at least one child on correspondence, in a second family home, at private board, in a hostel, or enrolled at a boarding school. A comprehensive list of these isolated families was compiled by cross-referencing the names children enrolled in correspondence with the names of families in receipt of financial assistance. Although laborious, this procedure seems to have ensured that most eligible families received a questionnaire and altogether some 3 500 copies were sent out.

Depending on their location and degree of isolation a number of the families in the survey could have used different educational arrangements for each of their children. As well as the arrangements already mentioned, some could have sent younger children to a school on a daily attendance basis. For many families, as many as three different arrangements could be in use at a particular time. Analysis of the questionnaire showed that almost 2 520 had at least one child living away from home at a boarding school, hostel, or in private accommodation. Approximately 750 other families did not have a child living away from home, but had at least one child on correspondence. Finally, 150 families not included in the two previous groups had at least one child living with one of the parents in a second family home located near a school. A reasonable rate of response was obtained from the families who received questionnaires and 58% of those issued were completed and returned. After checking and editing, a total of 1 938 (55%) were accepted for analysis and were used to establish a data file.

In keeping with the objectives of this survey, the questionnaire has provided biographic data about these isolated families and their student children. It has also provided information about attitudes they have towards children living away from home. The association between these attitudes and decisions about living away from home are considered subsequently, and in the remainder of this chapter, the biographic data about family circumstances are reported. These are considered in terms of home location and socio-economic factors.

HOME LOCATION

As the target population for the questionnaire was families who did not have daily access to schools, the location of the family home was of considerable interest. Prior to despatch, questionnaires were encoded to show the local authority area in which families

lived. Questions were asked about the length of residence at the present family home, the distance between this home and the nearest business centre, the time taken to travel this distance, and the frequency of visits to the centre. As well, questions were directed toward problems of reaching primary and secondary school facilities. Results obtained from these questions are discussed in turn.

Geographic spread

From the local authority code it was possible to determine the geographic spread of families that responded to the questionnaire. Figure 4.1 shows the number of responses from each of the statistical divisions in Queensland. These divisions are conglomerations of local authority areas and are often used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the presentation of regional data. Further details of the spread of responses are obtainable from maps in Appendix 3 which show responses for each local authority area. As the diagrams indicate, responses to the questionnaires were geographically widespread as families from most local authority areas responded. In general, it seems that virtually all rural areas of the State were represented in the data obtained.

A second feature in connexion with the residential location of these families is that few move from one district to another. In answer to a question about the length of time families had spent in their present district the majority of respondents stated that this period exceeded 10 years. These data are shown in Table 4.1 which reveals that 68 % of families who returned the questionnaire were in this category. In contrast only 20 % had come to live in the district during the last five years, and as only three per cent had arrived within the last year, little inward migration of permanent settlers seems to have occurred.

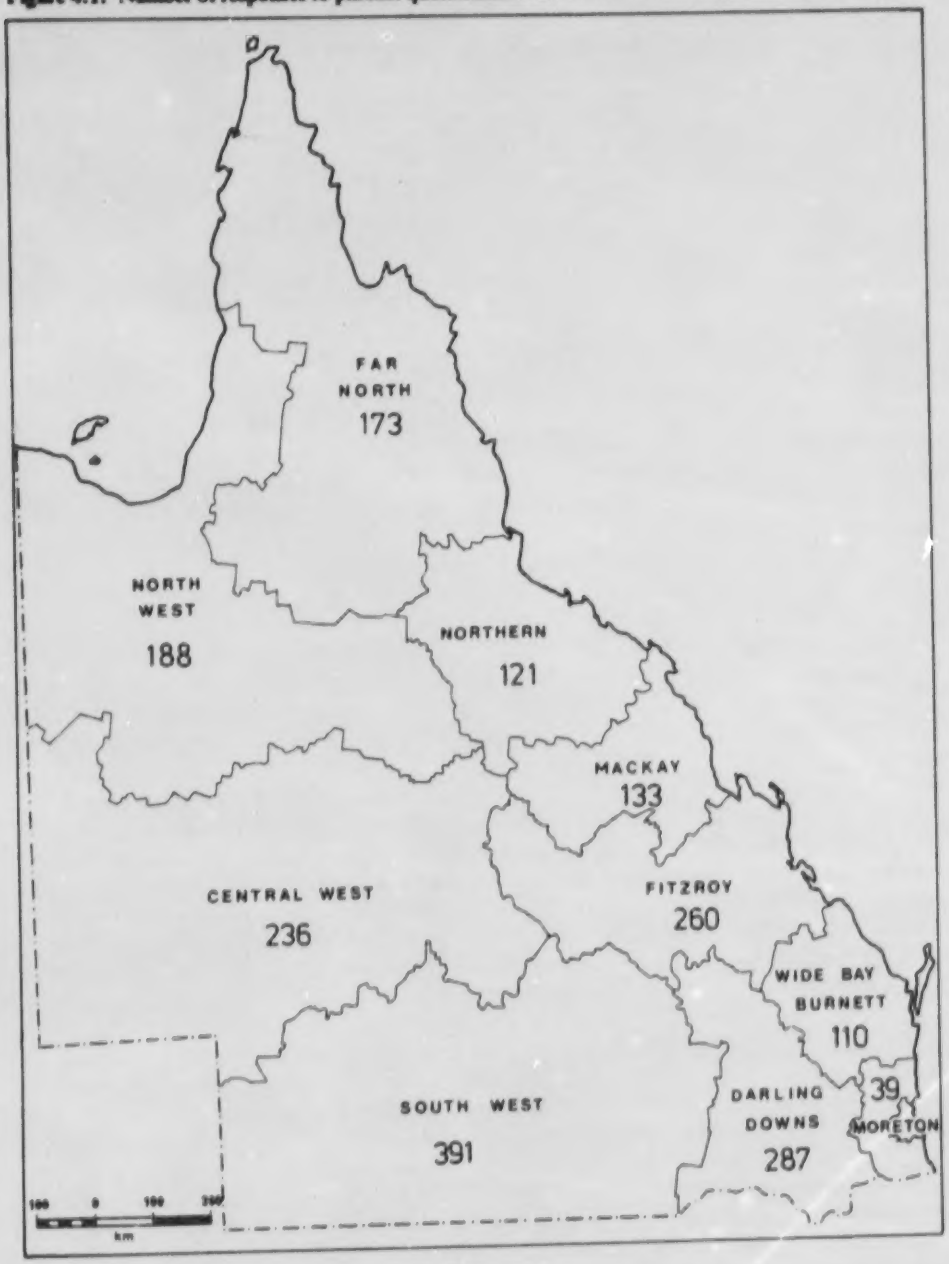
Table 4.1: Length of family residence in present district

Length of residence	*No. of families*[a]	*Percentage*[b] *(%)*
< 1 year	57	3
1-5 years	320	17
6-10 years	236	12
> 10 years	1 314	68
Total	1 927	

[a] Length of residence data was not available for 11 respondents
[b] Percentages have been rounded to nearest whole number.

It is possible of course, that the data in Table 4.1 may reflect a bias in responses to the questionnaire. As slightly less than one half of the families who received them did not respond, it is conceivable that they were predominantly transients. One explanation which might support this view is that because of frequent changes in address, many transient families might not have received the questionnaires sent to them. Nevertheless, only a few questionnaires were returned because the addressee could not be located. Another view might be that permanent residents have a greater interest in espousing their educational difficulties and consequently would be more inclined to make an effort to respond to the questionnaire. While these are plausible explanations which may suggest possible bias in the data, their influence is probably not so significant that the general results shown in Table 4.1 are unacceptable. Accordingly it seems reasonable to conclude that the majority of rural families who cannot send their children to school on a daily basis, are long term residents of the districts in which they live.

Figure 4.1: Number of responses to parents questionnaire in each statistical division in Queensland



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Isolation

As the proximity of family residences to centres where schools are most likely to have been established is of paramount importance to rural families, several questions were asked about distances, journey times and the frequency of visits to these centres. Data in Table 4.2 shows the distances which separate homes from the nearest business centres.

Table 4.2: Distance between family residences and nearest business centres

Distance to main business centres (kilometres)	*No. of families*[a]	*Percentage (%)*
<5	128	7
5- 50	438	23
51-100	554	29
101-200	489	26
>200	287	15
Total	1 896	

[a] Distance to business centre was not available for 42 respondents

The families who responded were, on average, some 120 kilometres from a town which offers business and shopping facilities. However the degree of disadvantage in connexion with distance varies considerably. About 70% of families must travel in excess of 50 kilometres to reach the nearest business centre and in 15% of cases, the distance exceeded 200 kilometres. Of the group which was more than 200 kilometres away, 12 families reported that the distance was more than 750 kilometres.

On the other hand, slightly less than one-third of the families were within 50 kilometres of a town, and 128 families or some 7% of respondents, reported living less than five kilometres away. At first sight, it may appear that this latter group has been incorrectly included in the target population. However it must be remembered that these families were included because they lived in small towns which did not have a full range of secondary school facilities, and consequently had children of secondary age who were living away from home.

From these data, an assessment of the extent to which isolation affects families that are unable to send their children to school on a daily basis, may be made. If it is accepted that the responses of the 55% of families who answered the questionnaire are reasonably representative of the total target population of 3 500 families, expectations are that almost two-thirds of them live within 100 kilometres of town, with nearly half of these families living within 50 kilometres. Overall, this amounts to some 2 300 and 1 100 families respectively. The data seem to suggest that the majority of these isolated families have reasonable access to rural towns and might live in areas classified in Chapter II as serviced grazing areas.

Within these areas the Department of Education operates some school bus routes which are around 100 kilometres in length. It may seem that considerable potential exists for further services of this kind in combination with the extension of state school facilities. However, the problem is that isolation cannot be measured in terms of distance alone. Distance may be the prime factor which robs these families of educational facilities commonplace in urban areas but other influences, such as poor roads and the impact of adverse weather conditions, can also contribute significantly to isolation. In this context, interested organisations such as the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland warn of the existence of many different types of unsealed roads in Queensland's country areas. They include sand, stone, clay, sandstone and natural earth, each of which has its own dangers. Clay and black

soil roads, for example, become slippery in light rain and quickly become impassable in moderate rain. Creek crossings which often serve as short cuts, must understandably be treated with caution and may be unusable for weeks during the wet season. Wandering stock and wildlife are also a motoring hazard. However, the extent to which these factors exacerbate problems of distance and contribute to isolation are difficult to determine as their inhibiting influence on travel is not easy to measure.

As a further indication of their isolation the families who responded to the questionnaire were asked about the frequency of their visits to business centres. To obtain these data respondents were asked to categorise visits on a five point scale. This had a range which varied from visits more frequently than once a week to visits less frequently than once a month. Detailed results are cross-tabulated with distance in Appendix 4, Table 1 and as might be expected these data show that families close to towns tend to visit fairly frequently, but as distance increases, visits become less frequent. This is summarised in Table 4.3 which shows the modal frequency of visits for the distance intervals used in Table 4.2.

Table 4.3: Modal frequency of visits to business centres by distance from residence to these centres

Distance in kilometres	*Modal frequency of visit*
< 5	several times per week
5- 50	weekly
51-100	fortnightly
101-200	monthly
> 200	less frequently than monthly

Isolation from schools

In addition to questions of isolation from general and business facilities, other inquiries were made in the questionnaire about distances to schools, journey times to schools, and the availability of school transport services. As discussed in previous chapters, virtually all of the rural service towns in Queensland have state primary school facilities but not all have secondary schools, and where secondary departments have been attached to primary schools, facilities for years 11 and 12 are usually not available. Thus families which are located within reach of primary schools may be quite distant from secondary schools. Table 4.4 shows the distances between families and the closest primary and secondary school facilities.

Table 4.4: Distances between family residences[a] and nearest schools

Distance to school (km)	*Level of education*					
	Primary		*Junior secondary*		*Senior secondary*	
	No. of families[b]	*Percentage (%)*	*No. of families*[c]	*Percentage (%)*	*No. of families*[d]	*Percentage*[e] *(%)*
< 5	359	19	148	8	12	1
5- 32	657	35	270	14	113	6
33-100	686	36	881	46	718	38
101-200	175	9	407	21	558	29
> 200	21	1	220	11	513	27
Total	1 898		1 926		1 914	

[a] Family residences total 1 938
[b] Distance to primary schools not stated in 40 cases
[c] Distance to junior secondary schools not stated in 12 cases
[d] Distance to senior secondary schools not stated in 24 cases
[e] Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

As schools are usually established to cater for one or more of the three levels of education — primary (years 1-7), junior secondary (years 8, 9 and 10), and senior secondary (years 11 and 12) — data in Table 4.4 has been arranged according to these categories. The tabulation shows that few respondent families had access to senior secondary schools. However a fairly large proportion were only a relatively short distance away from primary schools.

Table 4.4 has been structured to show the number of families who were within 33 kilometres of a school. This distance is of interest because where school transport arrangements exist, the parents of children in excess of 32 kilometres become eligible for state allowances to assist with the costs of living away from home. Accordingly, they may have children on correspondence, board them away from home, or have them travel fairly long journeys each day. As the tabulation shows, over one-half of the families were less than 33 kilometres from a primary school, but the proportion fell to 22% for junior secondary, and was only 7% for senior secondary. Moreover, only one per cent of the families who responded to the questionnaire were more than 200 kilometres from a primary school, but for junior secondary and senior secondary the percentages were 11 and 27 respectively. Undoubtedly problems of access increase as children become older and reach secondary level.

Although Table 4.4 shows that a considerable number of families who responded to the questionnaire were within 33 kilometres of a school, particularly a primary school, this should not be misinterpreted as representing fairly ready access. While many families within this range may not experience any great difficulties, data concerning journey times to schools indicate that even relatively short distances can take a fairly long time. Data collected from the questionnaire show for example, that about 70 families who were less than 33 kilometres from schools reported that the time taken for a one way journey exceeded one hour.

As indicated in previous sections of this report, access to schools in many rural areas of Queensland has been considerably enhanced through the implementation of school transport services. However the majority of the families who responded to this survey stated that they were unable to avail themselves of this facility. Responses to questions about the availability of school transport are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Number and percentage of families with access to school bus services [a]

Availability of school buses	*Level of education*					
	Primary		*Junior secondary*		*Senior secondary*	
	No. of families [b]	*Percentage (%)*	*No. of families* [c]	*Percentage (%)*	*No. of families* [d]	*Percentage (%)*
Available	562	31	441	23	285	15
Unavailable	1 273	69	1 438	77	1 556	85
Total	1 835		1 879		1 841	

[a] Family residences total 1 938
[b] Access to primary schools not stated in 103 cases
[c] Access to junior secondary schools not stated in 59 cases
[d] Access to senior secondary schools not stated in 97 cases

Less than one-third of the families reported that they could make use of transport services to primary schools, and even fewer had access to services carrying children to secondary facilities. Once again the data reflect the difficulties of access for senior secondary students, as only 15% of families stated that they could make use of school transport to

schools offering this level of education. These data are quite consistent with the target population which was chosen because of its remoteness. Accordingly it is not surprising that only a small proportion of the families were in a position to use school transport. Opportunities to use school transport services in fact diminished as the distance between home and school increased.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The socio-economic characteristics of the isolated families who provided information through the questionnaire may be considered in terms of family arrangements, parents' education, parents' occupation, and family income. Each of these is examined in turn. Summary data are to be found in Table 4.6.

Family arrangements

One clear feature which emerged from the questionnaires was that two parent families were predominant. Reference to Table 4.6 shows that 94% comprised two parents. Just slightly less than 5% were one parent families, and instances of children being in the custody of an adult who was not one of the parents were very few in number.

Table 4.6: Socio-economic characteristics of families

Socio-economic characteristics	*Responses*	
	No. of families	*Percentage [d] (%)*
Family situation [a]		
two parents	1 832	95
one parent	90	5
other	12	1
No. of school age children		
one	595	31
two	644	33
three	429	22
four	186	10
five	59	3
six	18	1
seven	6	0.3
eight	1	0.1
Occupational status of father [b]		
Property or Business Owner	1 326	71
Property or Business Manager	190	10
Employee	330	18
Unemployed	22	1
Pensioner	12	1
Employment status of mother		
Not employed	1 111	57
Full-time	510	26
Part-time	317	16
Family taxable income [c]		
< $3 000	464	26
$3 001-$6 000	374	21
$6 001-$10 000	408	23
$10 001-$15 000	308	17
$15 001-$20 000	114	6
>$20 000	95	5

[a] Family situation not stated for 4 cases
[b] Occupational status of father not stated for 58 cases
[c] Family taxable income not stated for 175 cases
[d] All percentages have been rounded

Data about the number of child dependents in the family showed that although most families tended to be fairly small, the range of dependent children was from one to nine. Average family size was slightly more than two children. One-fifth of the families had one child, and those with two or three children amounted to 30% and 27% respectively. Families with more than three children comprised approximately another one-fifth of the total. As some of these children were either of pre-school age or students in post-secondary courses, Table 4.6 classifies families in terms of the number of children of school age. This distribution, is similar to that for all dependent children, with most families (86%) having one, two or three children at school at the time they completed the questionnaire.

Parents' education

Often enough, one of the benefits ascribed to education is that educated parents are likely to have high aspirations for their offspring; and in the next chapter, this matter is considered along with other factors which may influence the choice of educational arrangements made by isolated parents. Here, however, summary data are provided in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Education level reached by parents

Level of schooling	*Mother*		*Father*	
	Number [a]	*Percentage* [c] *(%)*	*Number* [b]	*Percentage* [c] *(%)*
No schooling	8	0.4	14	0.7
Some primary education	147	8	272	14
Completed primary	169	9	284	15
Year 8 or 9	448	24	433	23
Year 10	632	33	497	26
Year 11	156	8	98	5
Year 12	196	10	183	10
Tertiary	147	8	103	5
Total	1 903		1 884	

[a] Data not available for 35 mothers
[b] Data not available for 54 fathers
[c] All percentages have been rounded

In response to questions about the education level reached by the parents, mothers reported that on average they had reached year 9, and fathers indicated an average of year 8. As this table shows, 59% of the mothers and 47% of the fathers have a year 10 or higher level of education. Of these, 147 mothers (8%) and 103 fathers (6%) went on to some form of tertiary education. A total of 22 parents (less than 1%) reported that they had no schooling at all and 9% of the mothers and 15% of the fathers had an education only to the end of the primary years.

Parents' occupations

Considerable importance was attached to the collection of income and cost data in this survey, as the isolated parents who comprised the target population were chosen partly because they do not have direct access to a full range of state school facilities. Consequently, with the possible exception of correspondence lessons, they are unable to avail themselves of schools which do not charge fees and must incur direct costs of schooling which are not borne by the majority of families living in urban areas. Many pay tuition fees at private boarding schools, and furthermore, when children live away from home higher accommodation costs can be expected. As well, these families incur travel expenses on a number of occasions each year. To assess the capacity of families to meet such expenses, the

survey collected data relating to father's occupation, mother's employment status, family incomes, costs and allowance benefits.

The outcome of questions about the main source of income for these isolated families clearly established that some 71% of the male parents were self-employed, and were the owner-managers of rural properties or businesses. This is shown in Table 4.6. As some measure of the difference between this group and the overall population of Queensland, data from the Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1976 showed that only 17% of males in Queensland were self-employed. Table 4.6 also shows that an additional 10% of male parents who responded were employed by owners as the managers of rural properties or businesses. Furthermore, examination of the questionnaires showed that the owners and managers of properties located in the inland areas usually operated beef cattle and sheep holdings, while those living closer to the coast and in the south east of the State were more likely to be involved in dairying or grain growing. In the central and north coast areas they were mostly engaged in sugar production. As distinct from property owners and managers, the business owners tended to be located in the small rural service towns. Of the remaining 20% of families whose fathers were neither owner-managers or employed managers, 18% were employees, 1% were unemployed and a few were dependent upon other social benefits.

Responses to a question about the occupations of male parents were analysed in terms of major groupings used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. These are shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Occupations of male parents

Occupation	*No. of male parents*[a]	*Percentage*[b] *(%)*
Professional, technical, etc.	31	2
Administrative, managerial	27	1
Clerical	11	1
Sales	38	2
Farmers, fishermen, hunters, timbergetters, etc.	1 502	80
Miners, quarrymen	48	3
Transport, communications, etc.	40	2
Tradesmen, labourers	113	6
Service, sport, recreation	36	2
Armed services	1	0.1
Other	11	1
Pensioners	19	1
Total	1 877	

[a] Occupation for male parents was not stated for 61 respondents
[b] All percentages have been rounded

Unfortunately the data about the occupations of male parents provide little indication of the financial circumstances of the families who responded to the questionnaire. In keeping with the data about employment, this table shows that 80% of fathers (1 502) classified themselves in the occupational category that included farmers. Other occupations were represented by much smaller numbers. Labourers and tradesmen were the next largest group (113). They were employed mainly in towns by local councils or businessmen. The service group (36) were often workers in the tourist and accommodation business, and transport employees (40) who were usually employed by the railway. Miners (48) worked in small mining towns while sales (38) and clerical staff (27) were scattered throughout the State in small centres working for both private and public agencies. The managerial group (27) were

on properties or in small businesses, and the professionals (31) were teachers, doctors and dentists in small country towns.

The employment status of female parents is summarised in Table 4.6. It shows that the majority (57%) are not employed in an independent income-producing capacity. Nevertheless this does not exclude the possibility that some of them contribute significantly to the running of properties or businesses operated by their husbands although they may not be directly in receipt of remuneration on this account. Of those receiving an income, 26% reported being in full-time employment, while 16% worked on a part-time basis. Of the mothers who were employed, 73% were spouses of property and business owners and most shared in the ownership of the property or business. In this regard family partnerships and family companies seem to be a common arrangement. Some mothers who were employed did not live on properties but held a variety of positions in small towns. The largest group (197) in these centres included teacher aides, cleaners and cooks. Others were teachers, nurses, clerks and shop assistants. Small numbers were employed in administration, transportation and mining companies. A variety of other occupations included one doctor, an accountant, tourist industry workers, school bus drivers, and opal miners. Eighteen women stated they were pensioners.

Income

To obtain data about family income, respondents were asked to indicate the combined taxable income for the family in the financial year 1976-77. Rather than seek a direct statement of income, the questionnaire asked families to indicate one of six income categories to which they belonged. This was regarded as a preferable procedure which would lead to a better response rate and more accurate statements. As a result of this approach, only nine per cent of families failed to respond to the question. This response rate is similar to that of the population census in 1976, which did not obtain answers to income questions in 10 per cent of cases. Income data from the questionnaire are shown in Table 4.6.

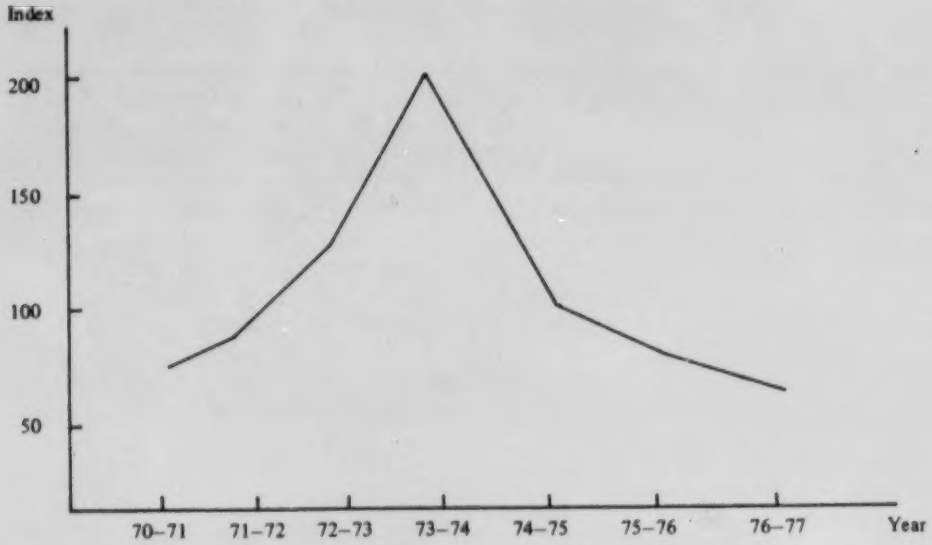
As so many respondents were engaged in primary industries, the financial effects of the severe rural recession at the time the questionnaire was administered, seems to be quite strongly reflected in the income data. Many families reported being on relatively low incomes. Slightly more than one quarter indicated incomes of less than $3 000 per annum and some stated that they had no taxable income at all, or that they operated at a loss. This of course is consistent with other information about the rural situation at that time. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics for example, reported at the National Agriculture Outlook Conference in 1977 that around 65% of sheep and beef properties in pastoral areas of Australia were in debt or were operating on large overdrafts.

While the income data from the survey suggest that quite a large proportion of the families who answered the questionnaire had relatively low disposable incomes, this is difficult to establish conclusively for several reasons. Firstly, as so many of the families in the survey were property or business owners, they probably benefited from deductions to total income which were not available to wage and salary earners. Consequently, any comparison between the taxable incomes of families in this survey with the Queensland population generally may tend to understate the income of the survey families. Secondly, other income data which are readily available are generally unsuitable for comparison as they are invariably collected on a different basis.

Another major difficulty in the interpretation of rural income data is that it fluctuates over time, and the cyclical variations may be quite extensive. To illustrate this, an index of

real income per farm was calculated by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and this is shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Index of real farm income[a] in Australia, 1970–71 to 1976–77



[a] 100 = average for 1970-71 to 1972-73 with income per farm deflated by Consumer Price Index.

Source: Keynote addresses, National Agricultural Outlook Conference, Vol. 1, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra, A.G.P.S., 1977, p. 69.

As this figure indicates, at the time isolated families responded to the survey questionnaire, late in 1977, rural incomes were, on average, much lower than they had been for a few years. If these data accurately reflect the Queensland rural scene, the level of income of many families in 1977 could have been considerably less than half to a quarter of what it was in 1973-74. Consequently the cross-sectional approach used in this survey has almost certainly resulted in the collection of income data which is atypical. However, to overcome this difficulty, collections on an annual basis would be necessary over an extended period of time.

Fortunately for the rural sector of the economy, primary industries have become more buoyant since these data were collected, and no doubt many of the families who responded to the questionnaire now enjoy better incomes than those reported in 1977. Early in 1979 the Bureau of Agricultural Economics forecast that average farm income in Australia could rise by 80 per cent in the 1978-79 financial year. However, this is not to say that all have benefited, or that benefits have been equally distributed. Moreover, many families may now be faced with the task of clearing debts incurred during the recession. Thus a significant proportion of rural families on low incomes, particularly low disposable incomes, almost certainly still exists, but at present no accurate data is available to assess the size of this group.

For isolated families faced with the expenses of travel, accommodation, tuition, and other costs associated with having children live away from home, these fluctuations in income must create difficulties, but in addition to these cyclical problems, some forecasters

believe that the long term prospects for rural industries are far from optimistic. According to Dillon[2], the prognosis over the next decade or so is for a steady decline in farmers' real income. He predicts that rural producers will continue to face a cost-price squeeze and that a process of rural adjustment will have to occur.

Costs and allowances

In view of the recognised difficulties associated with rural incomes, it is abundantly clear that many isolated families could not afford to send their children away to attend schools if financial assistance was not provided for this purpose by both the State and Commonwealth Governments. As the combination of boarding and tuition fees for children living away from home at boarding schools varies between $1 200 and $3 000 per annum, excluding hidden costs, a large proportion of the disposable income of the majority of families on low incomes would be consumed supporting just one child who was living away. Even for families on higher incomes, hardship would occur if two or three children living away from home had to be supported concurrently from net incomes.

To assess the financial impact on family incomes of having children live away from home, the questionnaire sought data about education costs for each child and the allowances received to assist them meet these costs. As previously discussed, and as shown in Appendix 2, both the State and Commonwealth Governments offer allowances. As a result, a variety of different forms of assistance are available which have different eligibility criteria and offer different levels of assistance.

While most families would receive between $300 and $1 000 per annum for each child living away from home, it would be possible in certain circumstances for a family on a low income with a child in year 11 or 12 to receive as much as $3 000 per annum. However from questionnaire responses it seems that very few families receive assistance at anywhere near this level. Only 11 % of all respondents eligible for living away from home allowances stated that they received $3 000 or more per annum, and in any case this was usually in respect of more than one child.

Ultimately the financial burden on families is the difference between total costs and allowances received, or the net cost of having children live away from home. To calculate this amount for each family, questions were asked about education costs related to fee payments and travel, and the types of allowances received. To assist with the checking of data, parents were also asked to show the total amount received in allowance payments. Unfortunately however, questions about both costs and allowances were poorly answered, and despite extensive checking, yielded relatively poor results. Calculations of net costs were made only for the families using living away from home arrangements and these are shown in Table 4.9.

Families reported a wide range of costs and allowance benefits. Calculated annual net costs varied from zero to over $6 500 in a few cases. The data revealed differences in the costs and allowances of families because they differed in size and used various combinations of education arrangements. As the table shows, 17 % of the families reported no net costs at all.

For the remaining 1 229 families that did report some net cost associated with the education of their children, average annual expenditure was approximately $1 530. However, these data are certain to underestimate the costs involved as the questionnaire sought details about boarding, tuition and travel costs only. Other 'hidden' costs which parents mentioned, both through the questionnaire and in interviews, included many other items such as booking fees, book rentals, laboratory levies, examination fees, excursion costs, laundry costs, pocket money, and the cost of uniforms. When these additional costs are taken into account, the evidence seems to suggest that families who have children living

Table 4.9: Net education costs for families using living away from home arrangements

Net cost ($)	*No. of families*[a]	*Percentage*[b] *(%)*
Nil	252	17
1- 500	272	18
501-1 000	266	18
1 001-1 500	207	14
1 501-2 000	152	10
2 001-2 500	108	7
2 501-3 000	78	5
3 001-3 500	48	3
3 501-4 000	30	2
>4 000	68	5
Total	1 481	

[a] 67 families did not supply sufficient information for net costs to be calculated
[b] Percentages have been rounded

away from home must make a fairly substantial financial contribution to their education, over and above amounts received from governments by way of allowances.

Parents were also asked to express their views about the adequacy of allowances they received. About one half of the respondents eligible for LAFH assistance indicated that they found the allowances to be inadequate. Of the other half, 34% were quite satisfied with the allowances received and about 16% did not make any response. Although greater dissatisfaction with allowances might have been expected amongst low income families, this does not seem to be the case as data in Table 4.10 shows.

Table 4.10: The views of families with children living away about inadequacy of allowances for families in different income categories

Income ($)	*No. of families*[a]	*Families viewing allowances as inadequate*	
		Number	*Percentage (%)*
<3 000	363	180	50
3 001- 6 000	280	131	47
6 001-10 000	329	154	47
10 001-15 000	264	150	57
15 001-20 000	107	54	51
>20 000	81	46	57

[a] Information was not available for 124 families

Views about the inadequacy of allowances seem remarkably consistent. Across all income ranges the proportion of families who regard allowances as inadequate remains close to one half. Not surprisingly, the proportion who regard allowances as adequate (which is tabulated in Appendix 4, Table 2) does not vary much from the overall average of 34%. Consequently attitudes towards the level of government assistance do not seem to be directly associated with the economic position of these isolated families.

On the other hand, a comparison of family attitudes towards the adequacy of allowances and the net annual cost of having children away from home indicates that families are responsive to cost increases. Table 4.11 shows that families who reported high net costs of maintaining members of the family away from home also tended to regard allowances as inadequate.

Table 4.11: The views of families with children living away about inadequacy of allowances for families in different net cost categories

Net cost ($)	*No. of families*[a,b]	*Families viewing allowances as inadequate*	
		Number	*Percentage (%)*
1- 500	272	105	39
501-1 000	266	131	49
1 001-1 500	207	124	60
1 501-2 000	152	97	64
2 001-2 500	108	67	62
2 501-3 000	78	44	56
>3 000	146	103	71

[a] Net costs were calculated as Nil for 252 families
[b] Because of insufficient information net costs were not calculated for 67 families

Amongst families with net costs below $500 per annum, 39% believed that allowances were inadequate. However, over 71% of families who incurred annual costs of $3 000 or more believed that allowances were inadequate. In the cost range $500-$2 000, the percentage of families who found allowances inadequate increased progressively with net costs. These data suggest that as families meet additional costs of supporting children who are away from home, they become increasingly dissatisfied with the level of allowance payments.

SUMMARY

In the survey, the questionnaire was directed at a limited cross-section of families living in isolated areas of Queensland. These families were regarded as having a need, or potential need, for LAFH facilities for their school age children. Of 3 500 questionnaires sent out, 1 938 were returned and accepted for analysis. The responses came from virtually every rural area of the State.

From a review of data obtained from this questionnaire, certain conclusions may be reached. Firstly, most families who responded to the questionnaire were isolated. Although a minority actually lived in rural towns, most were isolated to some extent. However the degree of isolation varied considerably when measured in terms of distance from towns and frequency of access to them.

Secondly, access to schools also varied considerably amongst the families surveyed. The data obtained indicated that both the distance and length of journeys made daily attendance at schools either impossible or extremely difficult. Even short distances from home to a school can mean fairly long journeys due to motoring conditions. Furthermore, as might be expected from a consideration of the pattern of establishment of state schools in rural areas, most families found access to primary schools was easier than access to secondary schools.

Thirdly, certain clear features have emerged about the family circumstances of these isolated families. The majority of male parents reported that they worked on the land, and most of them were owner-managers of rural properties. A few were employed managers. With few exceptions the families comprised two parents and where the mother indicated she was in receipt of remuneration for full-time employment, this was often in connexion with the family property. Families also stated that they were longstanding residents of the areas in which they lived. In essence, the majority of respondents to the questionnaires can be best described as stable, two parent families, who own and depend upon rural properties for their livelihood.

Fourthly, the questionnaire provided some information about the financial capacity of families to maintain children who live away from home to attend schools. Although data about family incomes must be cautiously interpreted, it appears that a fairly large proportion of isolated families received relatively low incomes during the rural recession in 1977, and would have almost certainly experienced difficulties supporting children living away from home.

Other data about costs and parental attitudes towards payments also indicates considerable dependence on government assistance. Moreover from data sources outside this study it seems that rural incomes are subject to considerable annual fluctuations, and this almost certainly intensifies the importance attached to the various schemes of government assistance.

References

1. Brown, J. *Geographical Isolation: A Case Study in South West Queensland*, B.A. Hons. Thesis University of Queensland, 1973.
2. Dillon, J.L., *"The Outlook for the Australian Rural Economy"*, *Keynote Addresses, National Agricultural Outlook Conference*, Vol. 1, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra, A.G.P.S., 1977, pp. 110-117.

Chapter V

CHOICE OF EDUCATIONAL ARRANGEMENT

Data about the home location and socio-economic circumstances of isolated families, which was reported in Chapter IV, was obtained from responses to questionnaires returned by parents. This chapter also draws upon data from these questionnaires, but focuses on the education arrangements which were made for children from these isolated families. As already indicated, the families who answered the questionnaire had, on average, about 2 children, but families varied in size from 1 to 9 children. Altogether the 1 938 families who supplied information had 4 381 children of school age and the educational arrangements adopted for them are set out in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Education arrangements for children from isolated families

Educational arrangements	*No. of students*[a]	*Percentage*[b] *(%)*
Living at home		
Daily attendance at school	1 065	24
Correspondence	837	19
Living away from home		
Boarding school	1 678	39
Student hostel	205	5
Private board	318	7
Second home	252	6
Total	4 355	

[a] Educational arrangements were not stated for 26 students
[b] All percentages have been rounded

As the target population for the survey of parents was families in receipt of some form of government assistance for the education of at least one isolated child, it was not surprising the find that 76% of the children reported in Table 5.1. were not attending a local school. They were either taking correspondence lessons or were living away from home so that they could attend school on a daily basis. On the other hand, the fact that 1 065 children, or 24%, were able to attend daily, may seem somewhat unusual. However, in previous discussion the State Government's widespread provision of primary schools has been highlighted and data in Table 4.4. has confirmed that the residences of some isolated parents are much closer to primary schools than secondary schools. Accordingly it would not be unusual for some isolated families to have young children attending primary school daily and older children living away from home or on correspondence. A closer examination of the data which relates education level and education arrangement shows that 80% of the children who were at home and attending schools daily were enrolled at primary schools.

Of the 4 355 children reported in Table 5.1, 2 453 or almost 57%, were living away from home, and as the table shows, most were in boarding schools. Relatively small numbers were

boarding privately, were accommodated in hostels or were living with one parent in a second home.

Within the two fundamental options of living away and remaining at home, parents obviously had a limited choice of alternative education and accommodation arrangements for their children. From previous sections of this report it is also obvious that the arrangements adopted were based on access to schools, the distance between schools and residences, and the availability and suitability of transport arrangements. However, data about other factors which may influence decisions parents make in connexion with the education of their children, and their preferences for particular educational arrangements, have not been explored. As some information concerning these matters was obtained from the questionnaire, it is presented in this chapter which, for convenience, analyses the available data in two main sections. The first considers factors which may influence family decision about having children live away from home. The second section is limited to a review of students who live away and analyses the type of schooling and accommodation chosen for them.

However, before data in connexion with these two sections are considered, this approach warrants a brief comment to ensure that it is not misinterpreted. While data analysis in these sections aids exposition, it is not suggested that decisions about educational arrangements are actually made by families in stages. Nor is it implied that families proceed through a hierarchy of decision making processes to determine suitable ways of educating their children. The problem of selecting suitable ways of educating children living in isolated areas is probably tackled by parents in a variety of different ways, but no attempt is made in this study to analyse the complexity of these processes. The sole purpose of arranging the discussion of choice in the two main sections of this chapter, is simply to facilitate data presentation.

SEPARATION FROM THE FAMILY

In response to an invitation to comment on reasons for either sending children away, or keeping them at home, some parents provided a variety of observations.

Not all families responded to this question, but those who did, stressed the impact of geographical isolation and some implied that this virtually forced parents to send children away from home to receive a good education. In addition other factors which were frequently mentioned may be collectively considered under the following headings:

(a) family attitudes;
(b) educational considerations; and
(c) finances.

Family attitudes

As might be expected, some parents expressed concern about the prospect of children being separated from the family to attend a school. Amongst parents who made comments about the desirability of keeping children at home, reference was often made to maintenance of the family as a unit. This is a topic which has not been extensively researched in Australia, but from a review of the few surveys that have been made of family roles and relationships, Krupinski and Stoller[1] have suggested that, *"family ties seem to be strong and there are clear emotional bonds between children and their parents in the vast majority of cases"*. If this is true of Australian families generally, it probably has greater significance for rural families in particular. The very nature of their isolation undoubtedly intensifies family bonds, and any

reluctance by isolated parents to have children live away from home would be understandable.

Naturally enough, concern over the separation of children from the rest of the family is probably greater for children of primary school age who are less likely than secondary children to cope effectively on their own outside the home environment. Table 5.2 cross-tabulates the education year level of children with the at home (AH) and living away from home (LAFH) arrangements shown in Table 5.1. It shows the proportion of students at various education levels who were either at home or away.

Table 5.2: Education arrangement for students [a] by major education levels

Year level	*Living away from home*		*Living at home*		*Total number of students*
	No. of students	*Percentage (%)*	*No. of students*	*Percentage (%)*	
Primary					
Below Year 6	249	18	1 138	82	1 387
Years 6 & 7	210	34	415	66	625
Secondary					
Years 8, 9, 10	1 141	81	274	19	1 415
Years 11 & 12	773	98	13	2	786

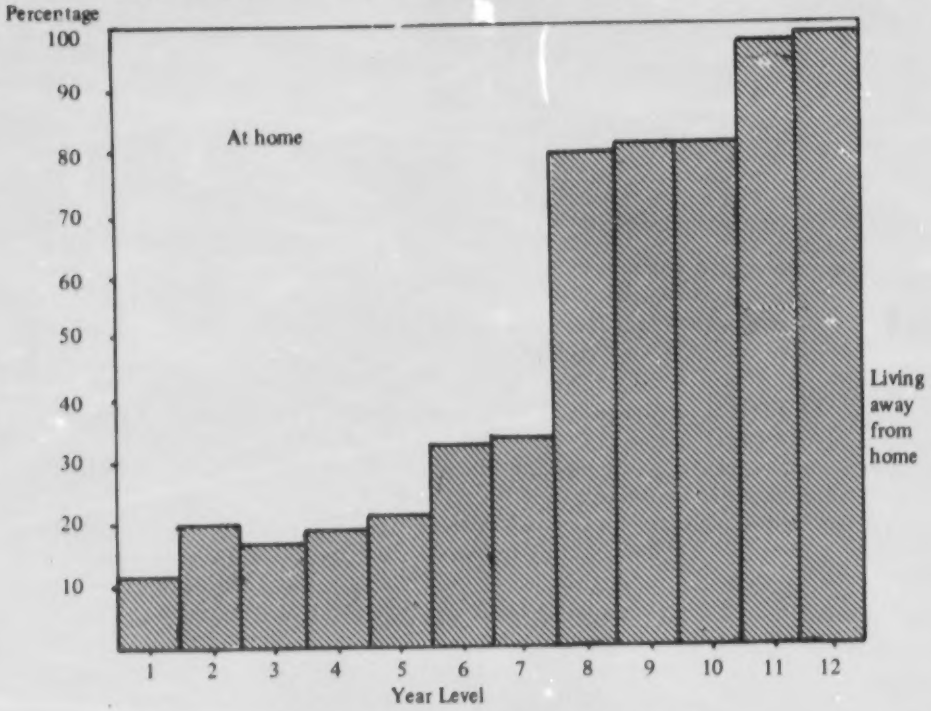
[a] There were 168 cases of invalid data.

Fortunately the majority of young children can be kept at home because small primary schools are available in many remote areas, and because primary correspondence education is fairly widely accepted. Table 5.2 shows that 82% of young children in school levels below year 6 were at home. Further examination of data shows that, of these, roughly one half attended school daily and the other half took correspondence (Appendix 4 Table 3). Nevertheless, Table 5.2 shows that 249 children were apparently unable to attend school daily or take correspondence and were being educated through LAFH arrangements despite the fact that they were very young. Analysis of questionnaires showed that the factors which seemed to contribute to their particular circumstances were one parent families, employment commitments of both parents, constant travel associated with the employment of parents, and the inability of parents to cope with the supervision of correspondence education.

Data in Table 5.2 also reflects the increasing difficulties of access to schools which families experience as children grown older. This tendency is further illustrated by Figure 5.1 which shows the proportion of children away from home at each school year level.

This figure clearly indicates some marked differences in the proportion of children at each school year level who are away from home. However, the differences between the major educational bands are far more obvious than those between year levels. The increase between years 1 to 5 and years 6 and 7 at the primary level for example is considerable, but an even greater jump in the proportion away from home occurs at the beginning of junior secondary education (years 8, 9, 10). A further change is evident between the junior and senior secondary levels (years 11, 12). It appears that significant numbers of parents decide to send children away at the beginning of years 6, 8 and 11, but within these broad educational bands changes in the percentage of children living away from home are slight. Overall the figure shows an increase in the number living away from home from 23% in primary schools to 98% in years 11-12. The average age of students away from home proved to be 13.9 years compared with only 9.6 years for students at home.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of students living away from home and at home in each year level



A further consideration arising out of parents' reluctance to send young children away and the data reported above is the sequence of educational arrangements used by isolated families. Most children experience at least two arrangements during their school days, with the most common sequence being correspondence or attending school daily from home for the primary levels, followed by a boarding school for secondary education. However, it is not unusual for students to move through three arrangements by utilizing two LAFH options during their secondary education — perhaps comprising private board or a hostel for years 8, 9, 10 and a boarding school for years 11 and 12. The practice of using a number of education arrangements for a child's schooling means that at particular times during a family's development a combination of arrangements may be in use. For example, in the survey one family with 5 school-age children had children in years 3, 4 and 5 at home attending school daily, a child in year 8 at a hostel and the eldest child in year 11 at a boarding school.

An examination of the data about the sex of students indicated that male and female children are not treated differently when the time comes for them to be separated from the family for educational reasons. Overall 51 % of isolated students living away from home in 1977 were boys. Reference to Table 5.3 reveals that more boys than girls were sent away at the primary and junior secondary levels but this was reversed at senior secondary levels. This could be attributed either to parents keeping girls at home longer or to differing educational expectations for sons and daughters. A tabulation of students by sex for each school year level is available in Appendix 4, Table 4.

Table 5.3: Education level and sex of students living away from home

Education level	*No. of students*[a]	*No. of girls*	*No. of boys*	*Percentage of boys (%)*
Primary	459	211	248	54
Junior secondary	1 141	536	605	53
Senior secondary	773	412	361	47
Total	2 373	1 159	1 214	51

[a] Information was not provided for 80 students.

In an attempt to obtain some insights into family attitudes about sending children away from home, certain questions were included in the questionnaire to determine parental opinions. Responses to three of these questions warrant consideration. The questions sought the extent of agreement or disagreement with statements concerning:

(a) the justification for sending children away to obtain a good education;
(b) preferences for living away compared with driving children long distances to school; and
(c) preferences for accommodation facilities close to home so that children could return home frequently.

In general, responses to the first two of these questions indicated that the majority of parents favour sending children away from home (see Appendix 4, Table 5). Overall, 63% agreed that a good education justified sending children away. Moreover, preferences favoured sending children away rather then coping with long daily journeys to school, and 78% of families responded in this manner.

The majority of families (68%) also favoured use of accommodation as close as possible to home to enable children to have frequent home visits. However while this may have been their preference, the arrangements actually adopted did not conform with their desires in this regard. As data about frequency of home visits revealed, almost 69% of the students living away were not able to return home more than three times a year i.e. at the end of each term (Appendix 4, Table 6).

Educational considerations

The fact that so many isolated children, especially at secondary level, live away from home to attend school, and the belief by isolated parents that separation from the family for educational reasons is justified, indicates that these families have a strong commmitment to education. This commitment was also reflected in responses to questions about the educational aspirations parents held for their children.

Table 5.4: Parents' educational aspirations for each of their children

Aspired education level	*No. of students*[a]	*Percentage (%)*
Tertiary	1 343	32
Complete year 12	1 611	38
Year 11 or 12	314	7
Complete year 10	512	12
Trade/Rural Training, etc	445	11
Total	4 225	

[a] Aspired education levels were not stated for 156 students

The views of parents about the majority of children were that they should complete all years of secondary school at least. Almost a third of the children were expected to enter tertiary institutions. Further analysis of these data as presented in Appendix 4, Table 7, show that aspirations for children at home were similar to those being educated away from home. However it must be remembered that the children at home tended to be younger and no doubt many would leave home at a later stage in their education. Closer inspection of parents' aspirations also showed slightly different expectations for sons than for daughters (Appendix 4, Table 8). In brief this suggests that more boys will undertake rural training or enter a trade than girls, but more girls are expected to complete year 12 and become tertiary students. To some extent this helps explain why more girls than boys live away from home to undertake school years 11 and 12.

As educational expectations are invariably linked with future occupational prospects, it was not surprising to discover that almost one half of the children were expected to have to leave home to secure employment, probably in a city. From responses to a question about the location of future employment for their children, 51% of parents thought that the children would move to a city. Parents who were uncertain on this point amounted to 30%, and the remaining 19% disagreed. This is in line with many parent comments that if children were able to board away in large towns they received a better education, became familiar with city life and were able to compete on more even terms in the city job market.

Results of other studies indicate that these parental expectations do, in fact, reflect the post-school experiences of many youths from isolated areas. Movement from rural areas to cities in search of employment frequently occurs. A study of school leavers in the Blackall area, for example, confirmed the need of many students to leave the district in search of employment. This study involved 173 students who completed year 10 at the secondary department of Blackall State School between 1974 and 1977*. It showed that 63% of these students left school at the end of year 10 to seek employment. However only 54 (49%) managed to obtain full-time permanent employment in the district in which they lived. Twenty-two (20%) found casual work and the balance (30%) either had to leave the district for employment or remain unemployed. Of those 64 students who continued with their studies, information is only available on the 1974 and 1975 cohorts — a total of 29 students. Twenty-one of these students went to boarding school, 2 to private board with relatives and 1 to a student hostel. After leaving school, 11 of the 29 students (38%) who sought a higher education were able to return to jobs in Blackall. In total only 47% of Blackall students who entered the work force during the period 1974-1977 were able to find full-time employment in the Blackall district.

Consistent with aspirations they have for their children, isolated families indicated their eagerness for educational programs of high quality for their children. This arose from comments they wrote on questionnaires and through interviews with the research team. In general, their responses showed that arrangements for primary education were regarded as fairly satisfactory, but they were critical of secondary education.

This dichotomy is quite marked in relation to correspondence studies. At the primary level, and in particular for the school levels prior to year six, correspondence seems to be quite acceptable. Comments indicated that mothers and governesses felt competent to supervise lessons, especially if additional support was available through schools of the air. This viewpoint is also shared by the Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA) which

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* This information was presented to a Commonwealth Working Party in 1978 by two parents representing *"problems in outback schools"*.

adopted the principle in 1971 that, wherever possible, primary school children should be educated in their home environment. On the other hand, the ICPA does not favour secondary correspondence *"because of its limitations in curriculum; lack of social, sporting and cultural outlets; lack of mixing with peer groups and lack of appreciation of a wider community and world"*.[2] Comments in the parents questionnaire indicated a similar lack of interest in secondary correspondence which was regarded as unsatisfactory due to the increasingly complex nature of the subject matter at secondary level and the fact that parents themselves were increasingly less able to assist their children with their studies.

Amongst isolated parents this dissatisfaction with secondary education applies equally to rural secondary schools and secondary departments. Some of the shortcomings cited in the questionnaire included:

(a) limited curricula offerings;
(b) lack of specialist teachers and counsellors;
(c) lack of remedial help;
(d) a high turnover of staff and a related downturn in available teaching experience, skills and enthusiasm; and
(e) long and tiring school bus runs which effectively exclude students from participation in extra-curricular activities.

Many parents felt that these shortcomings could be overcome by sending children away to larger centres with full high school facilities and city boarding schools seemed to have particular appeal. In this context the high proportion of their children living away from home, as shown in Table 5.2, is not surprising.

Finances

Quite apart from parents' convictions about the value of a good education and their willingness to have older children living away from home, isolated families must also consider the financial implications of this type of arrangement. Thus family wealth, family income, government assistance, and a range of costs associated with having children away from home must be considered, and could possibly be the final determinant of whether or not children board away from home. Unfortunately data about the impact of finances were hard to obtain. Even when available, they often proved difficult to interpret. It was not possible in this survey to gather information about family wealth and, as already indicated in the previous chapter, caution must be exercised in the interpretation of the income data which was collected through the parents questionnaire.

Earlier consideration of incomes, the net costs of having children away from home and family attitudes towards allowances provided by governments, indicated that satisfaction with allowances was related to net costs rather than incomes. These data suggest that the financial factors which influence decisions about having children live away from home are more closely centred around the balance between costs and allowances, than on family wealth and income from sources other than government subsidies.

Nevertheless, on the basis of the available data it would be erroneous to suggest that family wealth and income are not influential in moulding decisions to send children away from home to attend school. In this regard at least four qualifications must be mentioned. Firstly, although Table 4.10 in the previous chapter shows that the majority of families had net costs of $1 500 or less in 1977, this understates the family expenses of sending children away. As the questionnaire sought data about tuition, accommodation and travel costs only, it excluded other items such as sports fees, excursion costs, uniforms and so on. Thus the drain on family finances was probably a good deal more than the net cost statistics suggest.

Secondly, the income of families determines the level of assistance received. Reference to Appendix 2 which details government allowances payable shows that some are means-tested. Consequently families on low incomes could receive greater assistance, and this may be more effective in offsetting costs.

A third factor is that families who are financially unable to contribute to the education costs of children who are away from home may select educational arrangements which have a low cost. In short, they may sacrifice quality to contain costs within the level of government assistance provided, thereby reducing or perhaps eliminating private family contributions.

Fourthly, because the target population comprised only families who were in receipt of some form of government assistance, the data collected may have inadvertantly reduced the impact of wealth and income on decisions to have children living away from home. Thus families whose children were withdrawn from school for financial, or other reasons after they reached the school leaving age, were excluded. It is possible that some withdrawals could have occurred because of poverty. However, in an effort to obtain some information about financial hardship, families were asked to report instances where children were brought home because of their inability to continue the payment of living away from home costs. Although only 4 % of families reported such an occurrence, most of these had taxable family incomes of less than $10 000 for the 1976-77 financial year.

While the survey data show that the relativity of costs and allowances concern isolated parents, the importance of family capacity to pay for costs not covered by government subsidies cannot be overlooked. When it comes to determining whether or not children can live away from home to attend school it seems reasonable to expect that the interrelationship of costs, allowances, and the family financial position is of vital importance.

THE SELECTION OF AWAY FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS

Although the first section of this review of choice of educational arrangements for isolated children was mainly concerned with factors that influence the separation of children from their families, it presented data in Table 5.1 which showed the number of children accommodated in different arrangements. This second stage of the review has a narrower perspective and consideration is limited to the choice of particular LAFH arrangements. Again, the main source of data is from the questionnaires completed and returned by isolated families.

At the time isolated families were surveyed in 1977, available records showed that some 4 100 children were accommodated in the four types of LAFH arrangements and the numbers reported to be in each LAFH arrangement are shown in Table 5.5. For comparison, the table also contains information from the parents questionnaire. This shows the number

Table 5.5: Number of students using living away from home arrangements

LAFH arrangements	*Number from available records*		*Numbers reported by survey*	
	Number [a]	*Percentage (%)*	*Number*	*Percentage (%)*
Boarding school	2 620	64	1 678	69
Private board	642	16	318	13
Second home	540	13	252	10
Hostel	302	7	205	8
Total	4 104		2 453	

[a] Approximate numbers of children receiving various LAFH allowances in 1977.

of children in the various arrangements as indicated by the families who responded to the questionnaire. As slightly more than one half of the families who received a questionnaire responded to it, it is not surprising to find that more than one half of the children recorded as living away from home, were represented in the survey results.

As previously discussed, boarding schools were the most favoured alternative by far, and accordingly Table 5.5 shows that, of the children living away from home, in excess of 60% were at boarding schools. It should be noted that both the total number of children recorded as living away from home, and the survey number, are similarly distributed across the four types of arrangements, with boarding schools the most favoured and hostels the least favoured. It seems that, in this regard, the questionnaire survey results are representative of the target population. A further feature of these statistics is the disparity between the proportion of children in boarding school and those accommodated in other arrangements. The data clearly indicate that private board, second homes and hostels are much less popular than boarding schools, but differences in preferences between these arrangements are relatively slight.

In addition to data about the actual placement of children, the questionnaire sought opinions of parents about LAFH arrangements by asking them to compare boarding schools, hostels and private board. As might be expected, opinions were in agreement with the actual arrangements chosen for children. The majority of families preferred boarding schools to both private board and hostels, and private board was rated better than hostels (Appendix 4, Table 9). Opinions on second homes were not canvassed in this series of questions. These data, coupled with the fact that almost 69% of isolated children who were living away were attending boarding schools make the strength of parents' preferences for this particular arrangement clear enough. Indeed discussions with some rural families lead to the view that boarding schools are the only LAFH arrangement they really consider.

Since parents' attitudes and their actual selection of LAFH arrangements reflect such a strong preference for boarding schools, their attractiveness is considered in the next section of this chapter. Other arrangements are then treated in turn.

Boarding schools

Earlier discussion in this chapter referred to the association between the value placed on education by isolated parents and their willingness to separate children from the family for extended periods to acquire a good education. As well, it has been observed that for some isolated families perceptions about boarding schools and living away from home, seem to be synonymous. Consequently, it is scarcely surprising that the majority of families select boarding schools. Comments made by parents and statistical data taken from the questionnaire reinforce the nexus between the quality of education desired and a preference for boarding schools. When asked to rank factors they considered in choosing board away from home, 62% of families who had at least one child enrolled at a boarding school stated that the prime consideration was *"high educational standards"*. Results are shown in Table 5.6. Moreover, a further 19% of these particular families were primarily concerned about out of school hours and extra curricular activities. Standards of accommodation however, attracted little interest from this group, and compared with educational matters, the fees were of concern to only a relatively small proportion of the families.

A range of comments appended to questionnaires further attested to the belief by some parents that high educational standards will be achieved in boarding schools rather than at the closest suitable state school. As previously mentioned there was considerable dissatisfaction with secondary facilities in rural areas. Comments indicated that parents felt

Table 5.6: Opinions concerning the most important factors in the selection of away from home arrangements for families with at least one child attending a boarding school

Factor	*Families selecting factor as the most important*	
	Number	Percentage (%)
High standard of education	665	62
Boarding & tuition fees	193	18
Supervision out of school	175	16
Extra curricular activities	34	3
High standard of accommodation	13	1
Total	1 080	

that boarding schools provided a broader curriculum, better discipline and more experienced and dedicated teachers. Consequently, general educational standards were thought to be higher and more consistent. The availability of remedial teaching was also perceived as important. Another advantage was the opportunity for personal development through contact with other students from different areas and socio-economic backgrounds. Parents believed that this developed their children's independence and broadened their outlooks to a degree impossible at local state schools. Extra-curricular activities offered in boarding schools were also considered to be important and were thought to extend a student's knowledge and skills particularly with regard to religious instruction, music and art. A school's urban setting and its propensity to utilise community cultural and sporting facilities were also favoured. A range of parents' comments in support of boarding schools is to be found in Appendix 5.

Parents' reponses to the questionnaire and the comments they supplied in connexion with educational matters seem to conform with other available information. For example, a boarding school headmaster who is conversant with isolated families and has had close contact with the ICPA, made the following statement about families who send children to boarding schools:

> *"They regard boarding school as giving their children a better education, both as a preparation for a future career . . . and as a means for completing the personal, cultural and religious development of their child. They regard the school as an extension of the family".*

Moreover, other research conducted by Donald McLeod Consulting Services, on behalf of the Warwick Presbyterian Schools produced similar results.[3] In a survey of 1 200 parents in 1976, McLeod's respondents were asked to rate 24 different factors in order of importance according to their influence on family decisions about secondary education. The four most important factors were:

(a) quality of instruction and teaching staff;
(b) type of courses offered;
(c) quality of discipline; and
(d) class size.

All of these factors, of course, reflect concerns about the quality of secondary schooling available to children from isolated families. The next three factors which parents listed were also of educational concern, though less directly than the first four. They were:

(a) christian standards of teaching
(b) job and career prospects; and
(c) all round social development.

Further data, which reinforce the importance of educational factors in the selection of boarding schools, came from a consideration of parents' aspirations for children. These are set out in detail in Appendix 4, Table 10. High aspirations seem connected, not only with an acceptance of the concept of separation of family members as previously discussed, but with the selection of boarding schools as well. Amongst families with at least one child at boarding school, about 75% expected children to complete year 12, but the percentage of families who used other away from home arrangements and had similar aspirations was 65%. Although aspirations for tertiary studies were limited to 38% of children from families using boarding schools, aspirations for this education level were even more limited for the other families, which expected only 25% of children to reach this standard.

While the belief amongst isolated parents that boarding schools offer a high standard of education seems of paramount importance in their preference for this type of educational arrangement, this does not mean that other influences are not at work. Tradition, for example, may also be influential. From the historical account in Chapter III of boarding school development, it is clear that use of this type of arrangement is a well entrenched aspect of rural living. For many families, a boarding school education has been accepted practice for generations, and this tradition may partly explain the strong preference for these schools. Some parents, for example, reported that they considered their own boarding school experience to be valuable and wanted their children to have a similar advantage. Although data about the influence of tradition is sparse, a survey conducted by the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association in 1976 found that around 30% of existing and prospective parents obtained information about schools through the previous attendance of some other family member. Moreover approximately 40% were informed *"through friends"*[4].

A preference for boarding schools could also be partly attributable to their publicity. Many schools advertise through the press, by the distribution of brochures, and by having school principals and staff visit isolated areas. As well, boarding schools are sufficiently varied and numerous to offer places for children with a variety of educational needs. This means that most family requirements are satisfied in terms of religous preferences, co-education or single sex education, and remedial education offered.

Other arrangements

Although the majority of isolated children who live away from home were enrolled at boarding schools, a significant number were not educated through this arrangement. Almost one third of all children away from home in 1977, or some 1 500 children altogether, were accommodated elsewhere. After boarding schools, private board was the most frequently used arrangement, and catered for 13% of the total living away from home. Second homes and hostels were used by 10% and 8% respectively. Thus, preferences expressed by isolated parents for LAFH arrangements show that a significant proportion select alternatives to boarding schools. This is despite the fact that places in boarding school could almost certainly be found for many children if parents desired to do so.

Data from the parents questionnaire permit some observations to be made about the attractiveness of the alternatives to boarding schools.

The first of these relates once again to parental concern about the quality of education their children receive. Like the users of boarding schools, parents of children boarding privately, in a second home, or at a hostel, also rate a high standard of education as the most important factor in the choice of board away from home. However this view is not as widespread amongst these parents as it is with parents who have at least one child at a boarding school. Whereas 62% of the parents belonging to the latter group rated

educational standards first, only 53% of parents using other arrangements were of the same opinion. Moreover, reference has already been made to a difference in the aspiration levels of parents, which indicated that parents using the alternative arrangements expected a smaller proportion of children to reach school year 12 or tertiary levels.

Another difference between the two groups of parents, with regard to concerns for educational standards, is in the choice of school. All boarding schools are privately operated, whereas most children who are accommodated in other arrangements attend state schools. Only a relatively small proportion, about 16%, are at non-state schools, and they mainly attend small catholic primary schools. Thus the parents of children in alternative accommodation appear to accept state schools which, on the other hand, seem to be anathema to parents who prefer boarding schools. Collectively parental opinions about the need for high standards of education, the aspirations they have for children, and the schools they choose, seem to indicate that parents concerned about the quality of their children's education are more likely to select boarding schools.

A second distinguishing feature of private board, second homes and hostels is that they accommodate a larger proportion of young children than boarding schools. Children in primary school classes comprise approximately 34% of those boarding privately, 60% of those in second homes, and 50% at hostels. By contrast, only 10% of boarding school enrolments are at the primary level. To some extent this may account for differences in attitudes towards educational standards between the parents of children at boarding schools and the others. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the parents questionnaire data, parents of children in the alternative arrangements may be potential users of boarding schools in the future. Family attitudes therefore, may change as children move into the secondary level and have a greater need for the more intensive educational environment that boarding schools provide. Nevertheless, considerable numbers of children in the three alternative arrangements are at secondary levels of schooling, and the notion of attitudinal change over time can, at best, only explain part of the differences between the parental groups.

A third consideration is the location of the boarding facility. Data already reported has shown that although most parents prefer to have children accommodated fairly close to home, only a few were able to achieve this. Because the majority of boarding schools tend to be located in the south-east corner of the State, and along the eastern seaboard, few rural families live sufficiently close to these schools to allow regular contact with students. Most boarding school students returned home at the end of each term, but a few found it

Table 5.7: Frequency of home visits by students living away at boarding schools and in other accommodation arrangements

Frequency of visits	*Students in boarding school*		*Students in other arrangements*	
	Number[a]	*Percentage*[c] (%)	*Number*[b]	*Percentage*[c] (%)
Weekly	78	5	353	60
Monthly	193	12	85	14
Once a term	1 370	84	152	26
Once a year	4	0.3	2	0.3
Total	1 645		592	

[a] Frequency of visits not stated for 33 students
[b] Frequency of visits not stated for 183 students
[c] Percentages have been rounded

impossible to return home more than once a year. This is shown in Table 5.7. Parents reported that long separations meant emotional strains for both children and parents, and many expressed regret at losing contact with their children once they went to boarding school.

Parents that do have children near to home, and are able to see them frequently, are mainly users of arrangements other than boarding schools. In contrast to boarding schools which had only a small proportion of children going home weekly, 60 % of children in private board, second homes, and hostels, had home visits on a weekly basis. It seems that families who wish to keep regular close contact with their children while they are away at school are virtually forced to select an arrangement other than a boarding school.

Fourthly, a distinct advantage of private board, second homes and hostels is that they are less expensive than boarding schools. As most children in these arrangments attend state schools, no tuition fees are payable. Even amongst those enrolled at non-state schools, fees are low since most attend small catholic schools. Furthermore, hostel accommodation fees are considerably lower than the boarding fees charged by most boarding schools. Not surprisingly, analysis of costs and government allowances indicated that the financial shortfall between the two was greater for families with children at boarding schools. Only 18 % of families with at least 1 child in boarding school indicated net costs of $1 000 or less but three quarters of families with a child in the other LAFH arrangements had net costs within those limits.

In addition to these four general observations about alternative accommodation to boarding schools, parents made specific comments about private board, hostels and second homes which indicated why they were favoured. In the case of private board, it seems that certain features make it preferred over second homes or hostels. A list of parents' comments about private board are to be found in Appendix 5. As private board involves an agreement between families, relatives, or friends, arrangements tend to be fairly flexible, and are tailored to meet particular requirements. Moreover, unlike boarding schools and hostels, private board is not restricted to specific geographic locations.

Grandparents were frequently mentioned in connexion with private board, and these circumstances gave parents an assurance that children were well cared for in a home environment. Board with grandparents or other relatives also seemed to be an economical arrangement and in some instances relatives agreed to board the students for the amount of the state Remote Area Allowance. The minimum allowance payable in 1977 was $240. As well, cases were reported of families supplementing this payment by providing farm produce. Indeed this *'payment in kind'* might well be preferred by low income parents.

From parents' comments, it seems that if friends or relatives were not available, parents often experienced difficulty in finding suitable board. Although some parents reported that high schools sometimes assisted in the search for accommodation, most arrangements were privately made and were organized by the family concerned. Dissatisfaction usually arose when there was insufficient supervision of children's out of school activities, or where personality clashes occurred between children and the foster family.

Second home situations are in a slightly different category from boarding schools, hostels and private board as they require the children to live away from home but still allow them to be with one of their parents. This option was utilised by just over 10 % of LAFH students and was more popular than student hostels. Because second home arrangements were so closely allied to normal family circumstances, this seemed to be particularly favoured for young children since one parent was personally able to supervise and care for the

children. The average school year level for children in second homes was year 6, because it was chosen mostly by families with several young children. Parents' comments showed that it was felt to be an alternative that could best maintain family unity. A second home located in a town not far from the main family residence enabled the whole family to be reunited regularly. In some 53% of cases the mother and children returned home weekly. Nevertheless, this arrangement is not without its disadvantages. Parents reported that problems associated with split households placed strains on marriages through the continued separation of husbands and wives. Some of the comments made by parents regarding second homes are given in Appendix 5.

Like boarding schools, student hostels have a long history in Queensland and discussions with parents revealed that the tradition of living away at hostels was well established. One of the main attractions of student hostels seems to be their relatively low cost accommodation, at least by comparison with many of the boarding schools. In some cases in 1977 government assistance virtually covered hostel fees. However, recent increases in the fees of most hostels have meant that the gap between hostel and boarding school fees is narrowing. Some hostels have attempted to keep fees low by operating for only five days of the week. Although this assists in keeping fees down, it may not result in reducing the costs of living away. Families who live a considerable distance from the hostel incur additional travel costs through weekly travel to collect their children.

The proximity of hostels may also lead to transitional use by some families to gradually introduce children to living away from home. Because hostels usually permit children to return home at week-ends children can become progressively accustomed to being away, and this is less traumatic than a sudden separation for many weeks which is likely to occur upon entry to a boarding school.

Although well run hostels with good management, suitable staff, and reasonable facilities, continue to attract students, parents expressed a fair amount of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of this arrangement. Much of the criticism related to the quality of supervision. Parents felt that this was either inadequate or inappropriate. It would be true to say that a hostel's efficiency and adequacy depend to a major degree on the quality of the staff its management can employ. All management committees reported great difficulty in this regard. The standard of boarding facilities and the lack of equipment and activities to occupy student leisure time was regarded as a serious problem. Some negative and positive parents' comments about hostels are in Appendix 5.

Mr R.H. Treweeke, Federal Vice-President of the ICPA, presented a similar bias against hostels in his paper to the National Council of Independent Schools seminar in Canberra in 1976. He stated that when sending children away, the overwhelming concern of parents was directed to the general physical, mental and moral welfare of their children. Mr Treweeke considered that many hostels failed in this regard because of poor physical facilities and lack of suitable staff. It was conceded however, that although some hostels had better facilities than many boarding schools, they still failed to realise their full potential because of a lack of integration with school activities and a coldness and impersonality in the running of the institution. Notwithstanding, ICPA supported the retention of hostels where facilities were adequate and a need was demonstrated. As well, several parents commented that they would patronise hostels if their standard of service improved. In this context it is interesting to note that some parents think enough of the concept to band together to run their own hostels. Parent-controlled hostels are now in operation in south-west Queensland at Bollon, Dirranbandi and St George.

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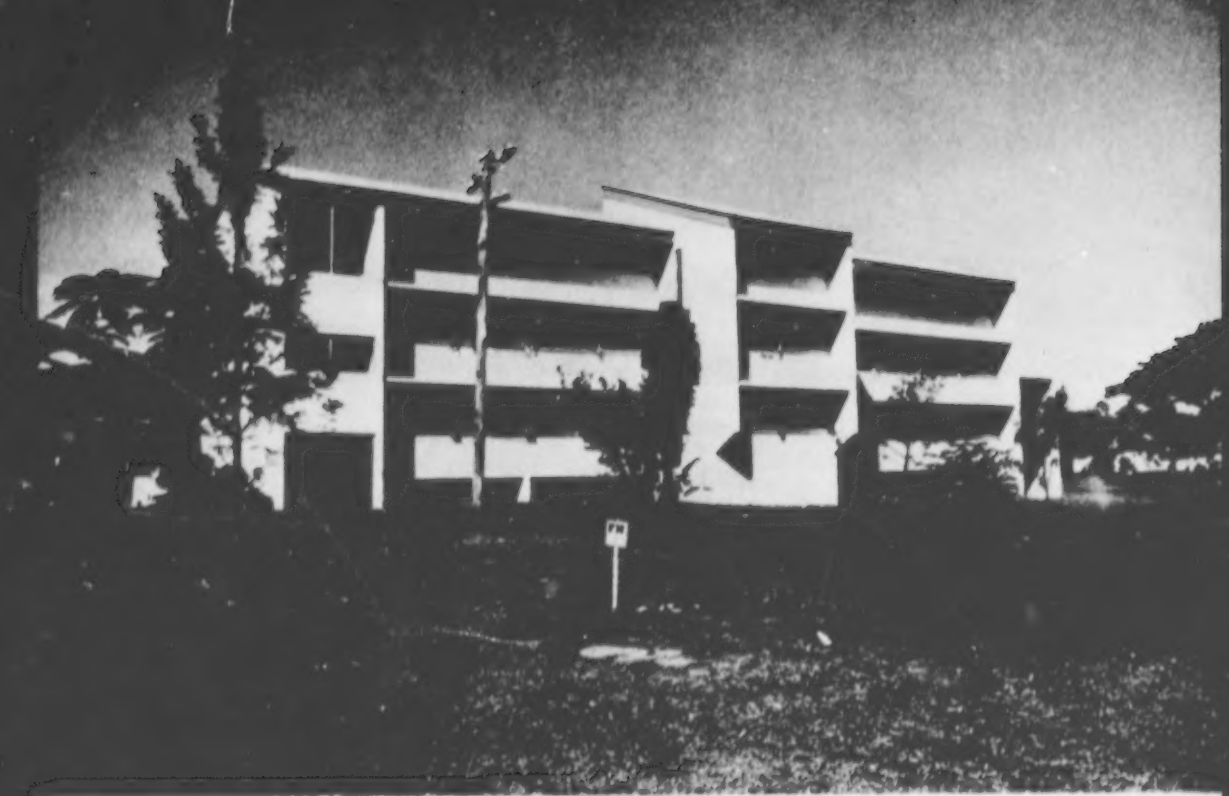

These photographs illustrate the contrast in facilities offered by LAFH institutions in Queensland.

Above: A new dormitory wing which has modern motel-like rooms for individual boarders

Below: An external view of an old dormitory wing which was poorly maintained and represented a possible fire hazard

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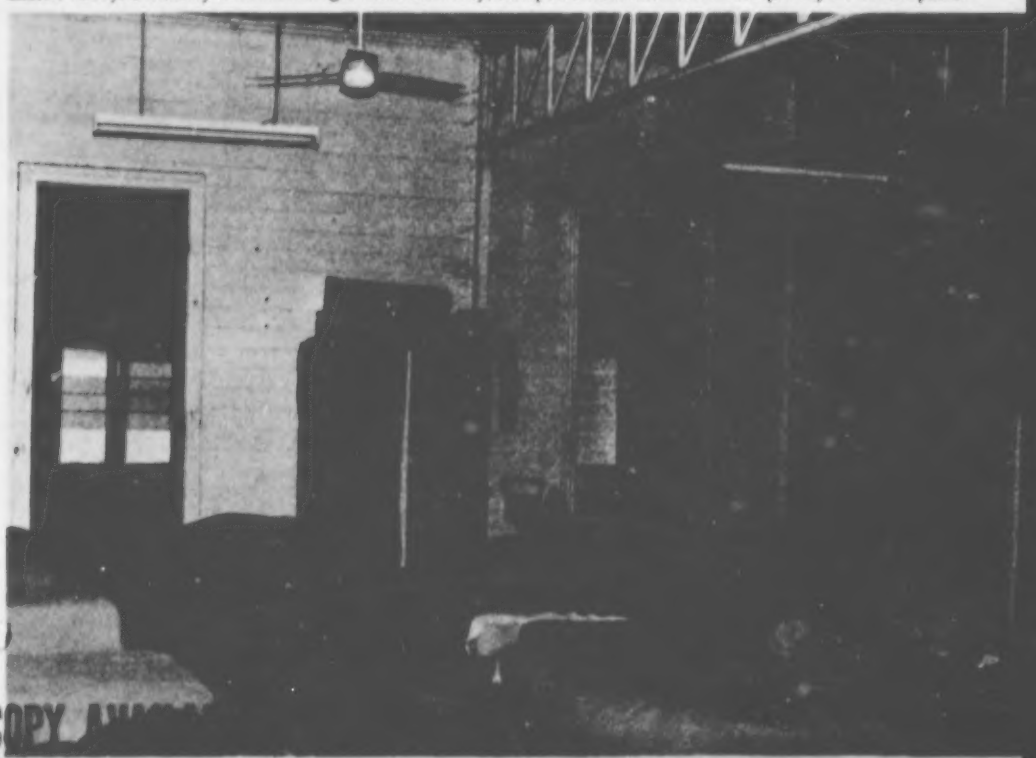
Above: A boarders room in a girls school is traditionally neat and tidy and has a homely quality.

Below: A boys dormitory which has meagre facilities, untidy, cramped conditions, and a lack of privacy for its occupants.



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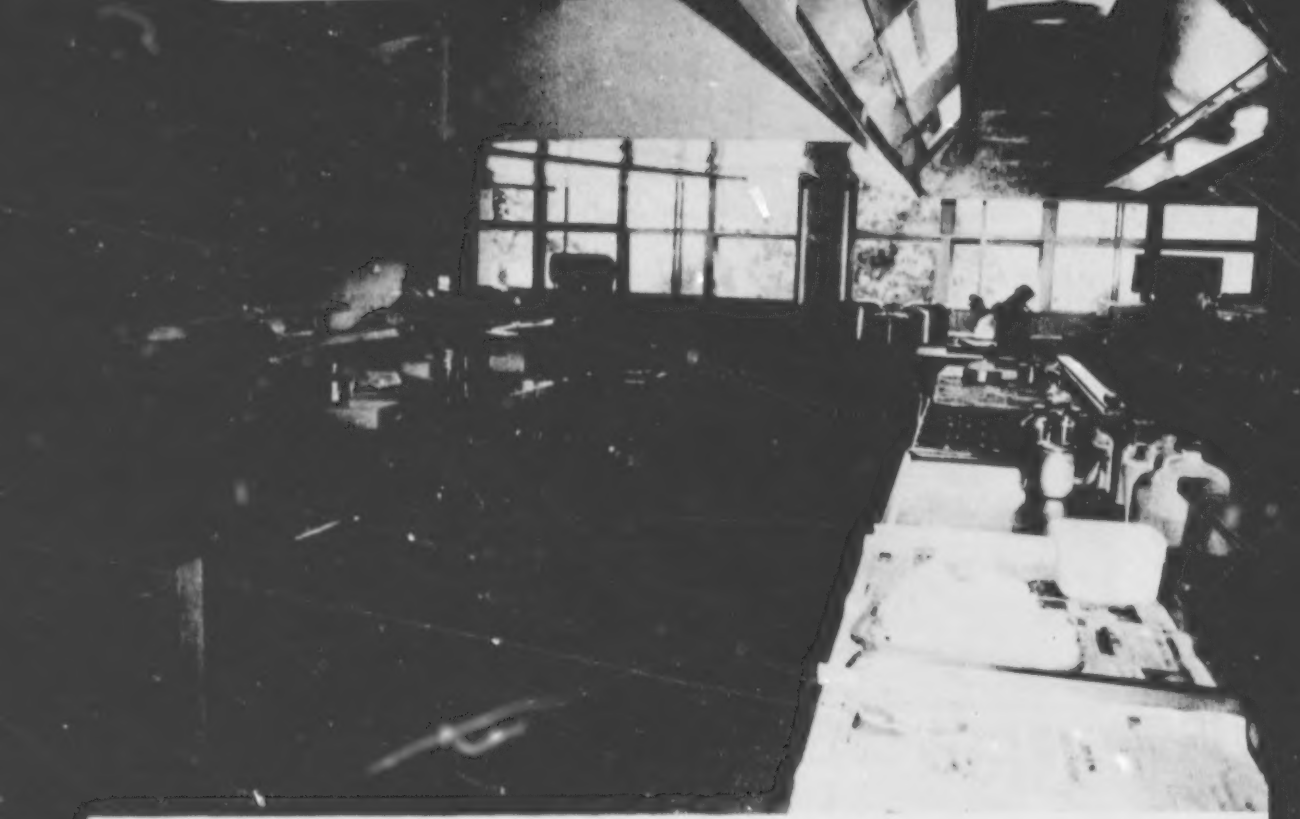

Above: One of the best examples of a modern functional kitchen in use in some boarding schools. Note the selection of gas and electric stoves and the extensive use of stainless steel

Below: A view of the kitchen facilities in a western hostel. It features an ancient stove, a wooden table for preparing food and a concrete floor

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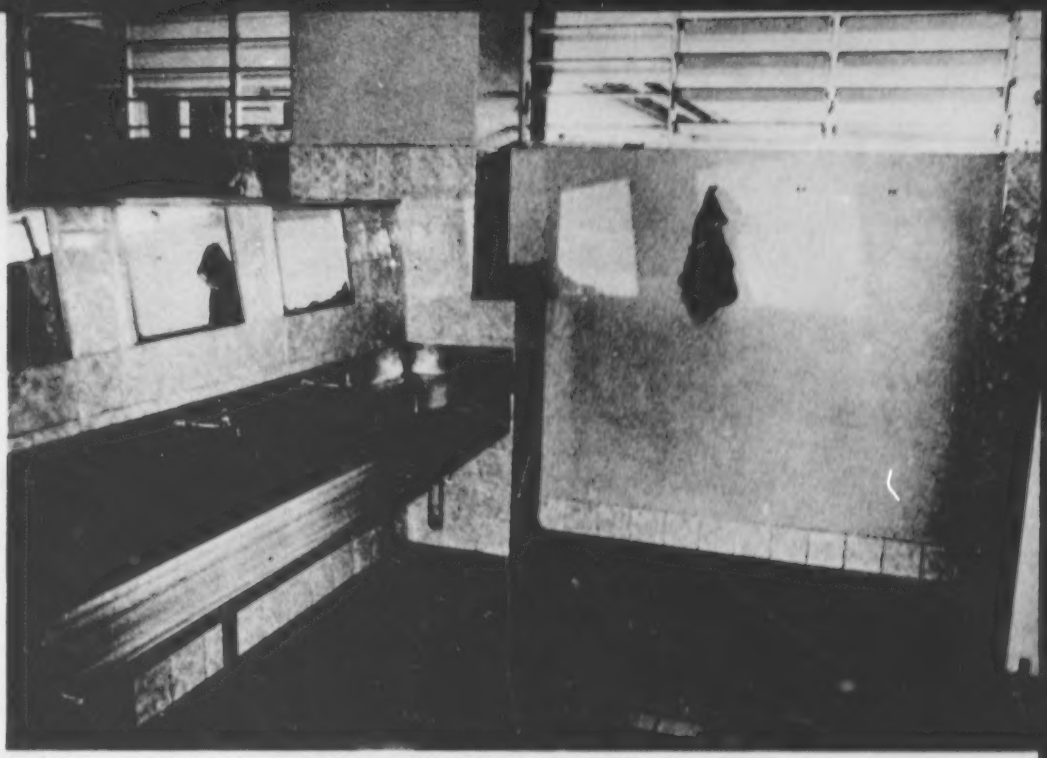
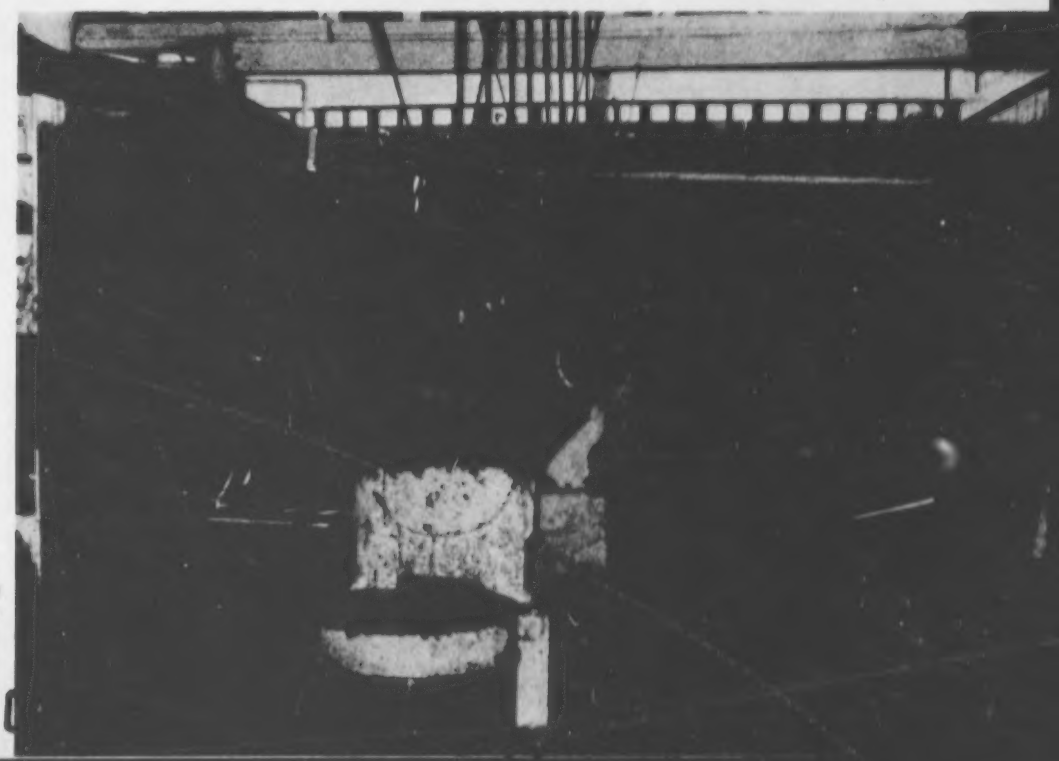


Washrooms range from the modern and luxurious **(above)** to the spartan and primitive **(below)**.



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Chapter VI

PROFILE OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter marks a change in emphasis from the discussion of isolated families and their preferences for LAFH facilities to an analysis of the institutional facilities provided in response to their needs. In so doing, the study moves from consideration of the parents questionnaire to the two Schools Commission's statistical surveys of boarding schools* and the Department of Education's survey of hostels. The study also takes account of a series of visits to a number of these institutions by Planning Branch personnel. The analysis examines the facilities provided together with associated costs and difficulties. This involves consideration of a number of factors including declining boarding enrolments, the rural recession, and rising operational costs. All of these factors have financial implications for boarding schools and hostels and these implications are analysed in Chapters VII and VIII respectively.

The data on boarding schools was, in the main, taken from the existing Schools Commission surveys, rather than administering a new departmental survey which could have inconvenienced the schools and possibly complicated the administration of the Schools Commission's 1978 survey. Accordingly permission was obtained from both the Schools Commission and each of the schools in the survey for Planning Branch to have access to the data already collected.

Unfortunately it later became obvious that there were some major disadvantages in this approach. Different types of questions, for example, were used in the two Schools Commission surveys which, when analysed, seemed to be probing cross-sectional data rather than setting up a framework for time series analysis. As a result boarding enrolments is one of the few areas to offer a sound base for assessing trends. Other data, particularly financial data, are restricted to cross-sectional analysis.

Problems also occurred when it was discovered that despite heavy editing and follow-up, the validity of responses to some questions in the 1974 survey was questionable. Certain financial responses were also suspect because of confusion over the definition of terms used and the degree of breakdown of data required. In all fairness however, it must be acknowledged that the 1974 survey represented the first attempt at a collection of this type. Its value ultimately lay in establishing a reliable and valid data collection framework for the 1976 survey. Consequently, most of the data used for this study reflects a cross-sectional analysis of the 1976 survey. In addition this has been supported by follow-up visits to a representative sample of 20 boarding schools throughout the State.

For student hostels, a survey instrument in the form of a questionnaire was designed in Planning Branch and administered to existing management committees during the latter half

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* These were conducted in respect of the 1974 and 1976 calendar year.

of 1977. The student hostel questionnaire was designed to extract the same type of data as that gathered for boarding schools so that some comparisons could be made. Ten of the 20 hostels surveyed received follow-up visits. This was considered necessary because of the problems experienced by hostels in answering their questionnaire.

THE NON-GOVERNMENT BOARDING SCHOOL SYSTEM

As shown in Chapter III, the demand for secondary education at the turn of the century engendered the need for non-government schools to assist their country students by providing boarding facilities. There are two groups of schools within the non-government sector and for the purpose of this study have been defined as *Catholic* and *Independent*.

The independent schools usually function autonomously although in some circumstances several schools may be administered in a loosely federated form by one board of governors. The Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA) provides one example of this. Notwithstanding, these schools are self-contained institutions each with its own principal and school board. The independent group of schools covers the non-denominational grammar schools and those run by the Church of England and Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran and Uniting Churches.

By comparison, the catholic schools are operated by two types of organizations — religious orders or catholic dioceses. The order controlled schools are, by and large, autonomous. The diocesan schools, on the other hand, constitute a loose system similar in some respects to the government system in that they are under the supervision of a central authority and have certain administrative and advisory services provided by offices of education both regionally and in Brisbane.

Both catholic and independent schools are eligible to join the Association of Independent Schools in Queensland (AISQ). However because of their affiliation with an order or diocese, the catholic schools are also represented in system level organisations at the state level. The best known of these is the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. It meets monthly and is in *"a favourable position to convey to interested persons, within and without the catholic school system, the ideals and practice and the aspirations and difficulties of the catholic boarding schools."*[1]

According to Father O'Shea,[2] Chairman of the Queensland Catholic Education Commission:

> *"The emphasis in the catholic system is on ensuring that as many aspirants as possible are able to receive a catholic education regardless of their socio-economic circumstances. As a result catholic fees are usually much lower than those charged by independent schools. This is not to fill up empty spaces but rather is an attempt to ensure that some aspirants are not excluded from attendance through their inability to pay the fees. The emphasis on a catholic education does not, however, prejudice quality education and special emphasis is placed on remedial work and individual personal care of students."*

The independent schools on the other hand appear to emphasize their concern with the whole child and publicity about the schools often centres on their sense of tradition and character, experienced staff and a comprehensive educational offering within a disciplined environment. The precise values and modes of operation however, vary from school to school, as does their Christian commitment.

BOARDING SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

It is important to understand at the outset that boarding schools are not the sole preserve of isolated children and that they cater for a variety of children whose families have

many different reasons for wishing them to attend. The non-isolated component* includes town and city children whose parents are travelling or working overseas, children who come from broken homes and children whose parents feel will benefit from a boarding school experience. There are a growing number of aboriginal children whose fees are covered by the Commonwealth Government under the Aboriginal Grants Scheme, in addition to a small number of overseas students. In 1974 schools reported in the Schools Commission survey that the isolated component made up about 44 % of total boarding enrolments although by 1978, on the basis of State and Commonwealth allowances paid to isolated children, the percentage appeared to have fallen to around 34 %.

The overall supply of boarding places

Most of the 26 independent schools are old and revered institutions with a great sense of history and tradition. All but four were established prior to 1920†. Information regarding the early boarding capacity of these schools was not available and no official system-wide record seems to have been compiled until the Schools Commission's statistical survey in 1974. At that time capacity totalled 5 657.** Visits to schools in 1978 revealed some individual variations to the 1974 data and on the basis of this subsequent advice, it was estimated that the capacity of independent schools in 1979 was 5 644, a reduction of only 11 places. Fifty-two percent of the 5 644 places thought to be available in 1979 were for boys.

Of the independent schools, 20 are in the south-east corner of the State with the remainder situated near the junction of the main railway lines in central and north Queensland. Eleven are for girls, 8 for boys and 7 are co-educational. There is only one primary boarding school as such, at Toowoomba, but 17 of the other schools do provide some facilities for primary students.

By comparison, the boarding capacity of the catholic system has declined markedly since 1970 as a result of the closure of 7 large boarding schools and several rural primary convents. This list includes All Hallows, St Rita's, Loreto, Soubirous and De La Salle (Brisbane), Christian Brothers College (Gympie) and St Mary's (Charleville). One of the principal reasons for the closures appears to relate to the declining number of religious vocations in boarding schools. The need to employ increasing numbers of lay personnel has imposed a financial burden on a system which emphasizes low fees and access to catholic education. As a consequence there were only 19 catholic boarding schools and 5 primary convents still operating in 1979††.

Of the 19 catholic boarding schools surveyed, only two do not provide any access to year 12 studies. They are St John's (Roma) and Nudgee Junior (Brisbane) which extend to years 10 and 7 respectively. Two girls schools, St Mary's in Charters Towers and St Ursula's in Toowoomba, recently achieved some economies by sharing the year 11-12 facilities of nearby brother schools. Apart from Nudgee Junior, three other schools (excluding the 5 rural convents) also cater for some primary boarders. Current boarding capacity is reported to be 3 630 with 62 % of the places for boys. The five rural convents provide an additional 120 places which makes the total available boarding capacity of catholic schools some 3 750 places. This represents a decline in catholic boarding capacity of around 13 % on the level reported in 1974.

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* i.e. children not eligible for either the Remote Area Allowance or the Isolated Childrens Allowance

† Operation histories for independent boarding schools range from 33 to 116 years.

** The definition of capacity is based on the number of beds available.

†† See Tables 3.1 and 3.2

Regionally, there are far more catholic than independent schools in country areas at 53% and 23% respectively. If the primary convents are included, the percentage of catholic boarding schools in country areas would increase to 63%.

In summary, total 1979 boarding capacity in Queensland was 9 274** of which only 241 places were for primary students. Twenty-nine of the 45** schools, and 5 583 of the places, were situated in the south-east corner of the State.

Figure 6.1 assists the summation by showing the approximate distribution of boarding places by system, sex and education level.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of boarding places by sex, system and education level, 1979

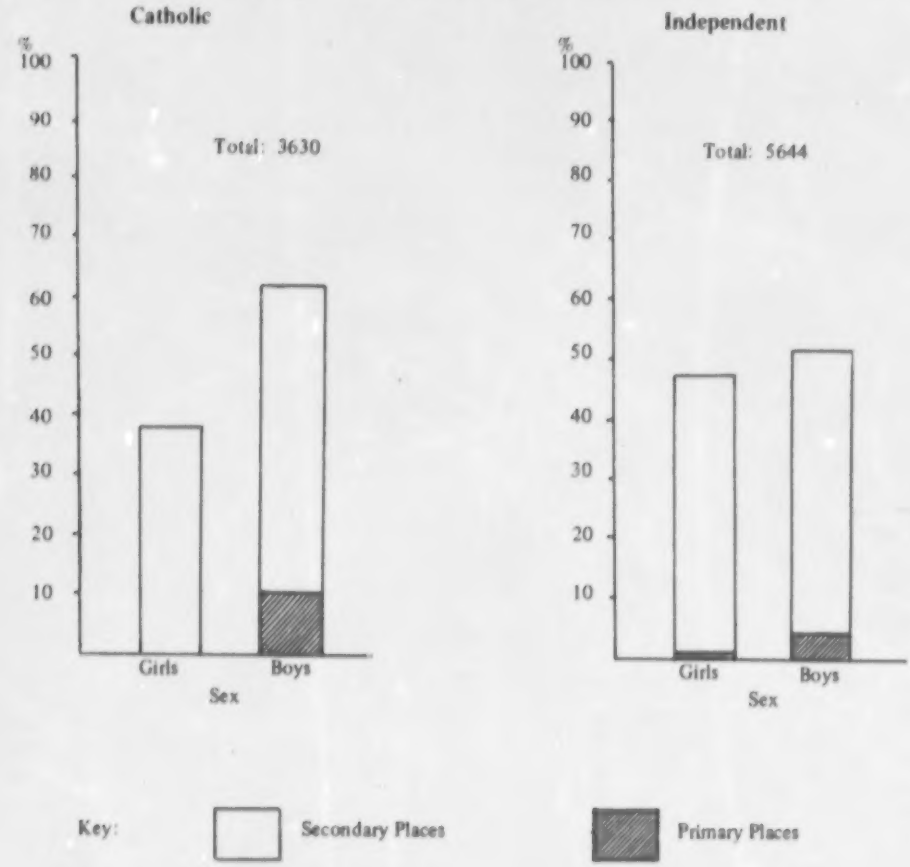
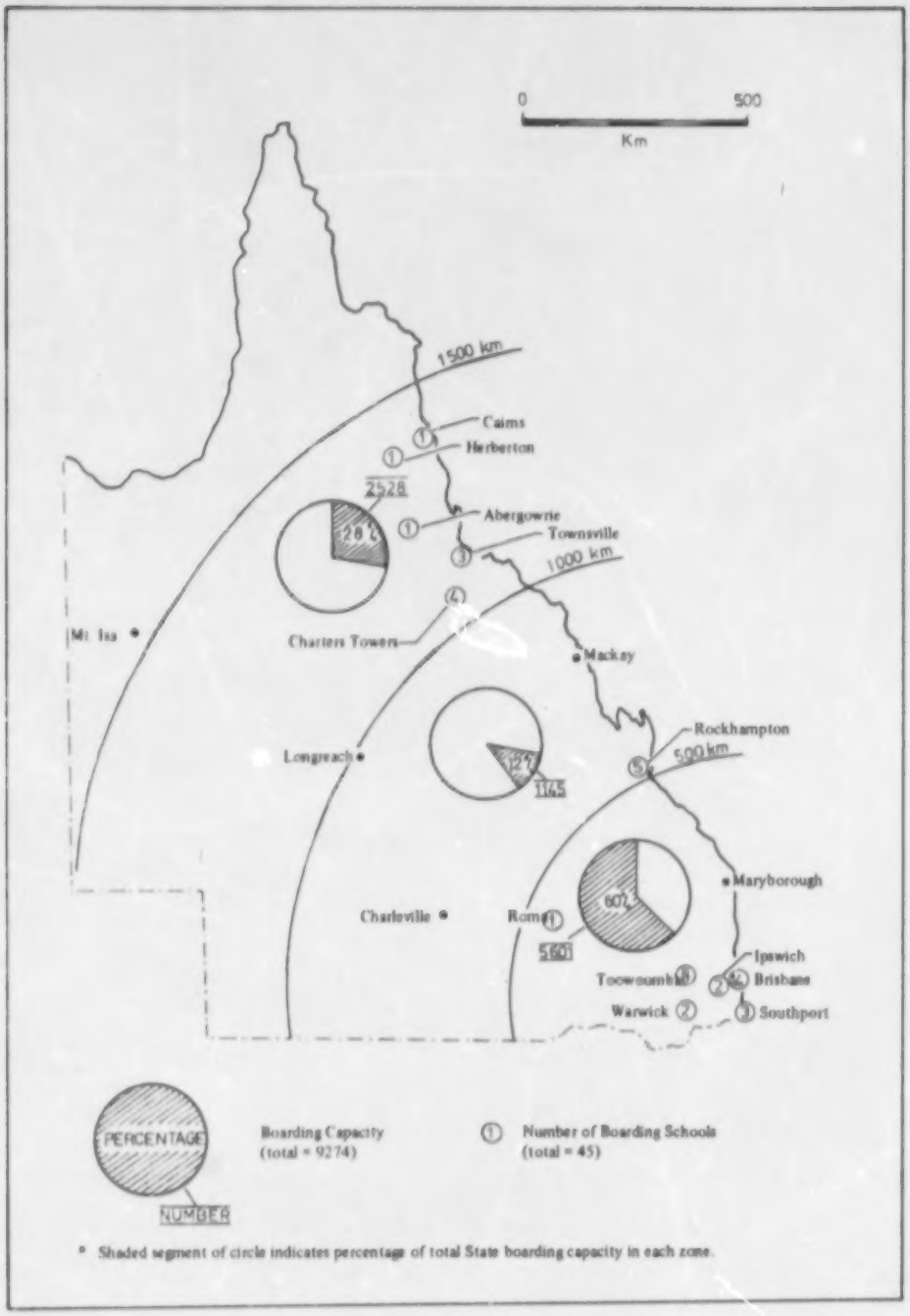


Figure 6.2 further supports the summary by illustrating the available boarding places by distance from Brisbane. It shows that 60% of the State's boarding capacity is within 500 km of the capital.

** Excludes the five small primary convents for which data is not available

Figure 6.2: Queensland boarding capacity by distance from Brisbane



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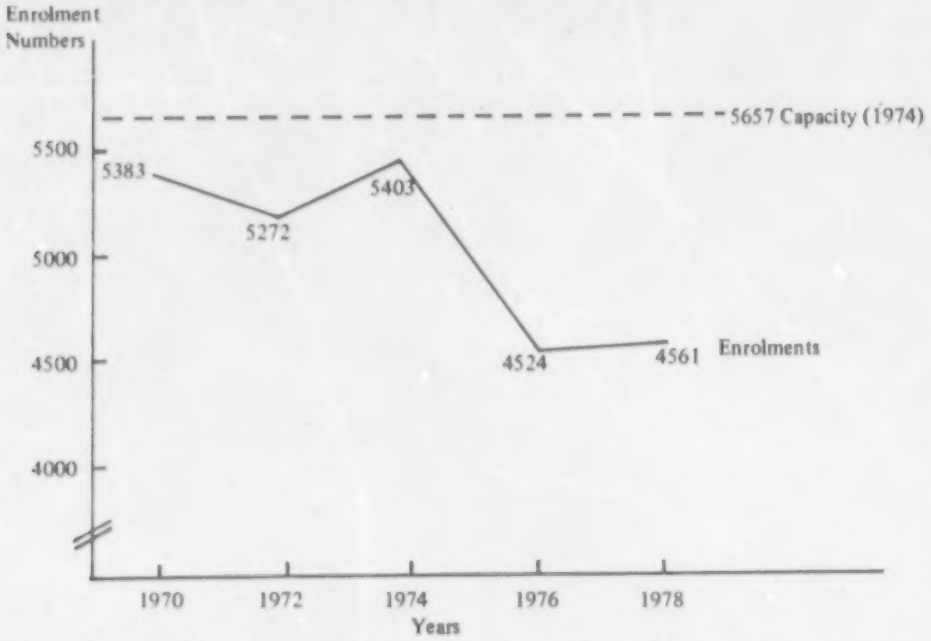
The decline in boarding enrolments

SACFEPAR's survey of boarding schools noted that there was a general decline in boarding schools and inferred that the principal cause was the downturn in boarding enrolments. This section examines the trend in Queensland for the period 1970-1978. As before, the two systems are first considered separately, then consolidated to present an overall state summary.

Independent boarding enrolments for the period 1970-1978 decreased from 5 383 to 4 561, a downturn of around 15%. This represents an annual average decline of less than 2% per annum. If it were not for the recovery in 1974, this might have represented a reasonably stable enrolment base for school planners, but the recovery meant that enrolments plunged 16% in the two year period to 1976 which is a decline of fairly critical proportions.

By 1978, the independent schools had retained only 84% of their peak 1974 enrolments. However as individual school retention rates ranged from 20% to 125%, it seems clear that the problem of declining enrolments has affected schools in different ways. Seventeen schools lost ground in this period and two of these schools fared so badly that they lost more than 50% of their boarders. Despite this, nine schools strengthened their position significantly, probably at the expense of the other 17 schools. The overall situation is presented graphically in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.3: Boarding enrolments in independent schools, 1970–78

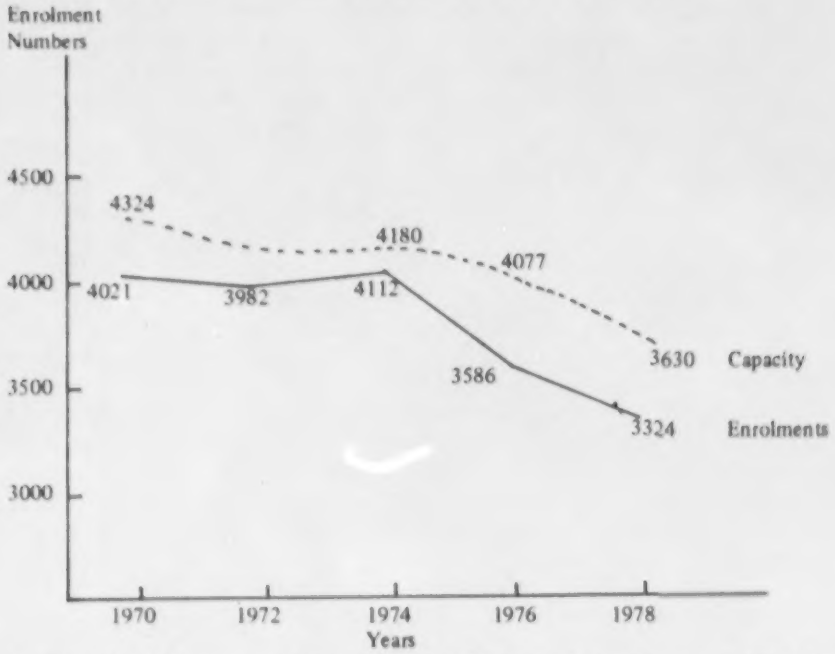


Source: Schools Commission Surveys of 1974 & 1976 & the Executive Officer, AISQ, for 1978 data

Catholic boarding enrolments for the period 1970-1978 declined 17% from 4 021 to 3 324 and also exhibited an enrolment peak in 1974. Thus for the period 1974-78 there was a downturn of some 19%. The situation is illustrated in Figure 6.4. The graph shows that in 1978 catholic schools retained 81% of their peak 1974 enrolments with the performance of

individual schools ranging from 54% to 120%. Twelve of the schools lost ground while 7 made some gains.

Figure 6.4: Boarding enrolments in Catholic schools, 1970–78



Source: Schools Commission Surveys of 1974 & 1976 & the Catholic Education Office for 1978 data

A comparison of Figures 6.3 and 6.4 shows that while the enrolment trends are similar, there appears to have been significant differences in the approach taken to total boarding capacity. This is reflected in the general downturn in catholic boarding school capacity during the past eight years and suggests that some attempt is being made to relate supply and demand as closely as possible to minimise operating costs. A more likely answer however is that the closures have stemmed from the problems created by the declining number of religious vocations.* The capacity of the independent boarding school system, on the other hand, has remained fairly steady. A summary of the overall boarding situation is provided in

Table 6.1: The overall boarding enrolments in Queensland, 1970-78

System	*No. of boarders*					*% Decline*
	1970	*1972*	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*	
Independent	5 383	5 272	5 403	4 524	4 561	15.3
Catholic	4 021	3 982	4 112	3 586	3 324	17.3
Total	9 404	9 254	9 515	8 110	7 885	16.2

* This problem is discussed in some detail in Chapter VII.

Table 6.1 which shows an average decline of 16% in Queensland in the period 1970-78. The decline for the period 1974-78 was 17%.

Although both systems recorded peak enrolments in 1974, enrolments were only about 1% higher than those recorded in 1970. Thus there was in effect a plateau of enrolments in the period 1970-74, followed by a dramatic decline in the period 1974-78. The tail-end of the plateau was apparently supported by the rural boom in 1973/74 when average farm income rose to $15 902. The decline in enrolments in 1974-78 coincided with a deepening rural depression. However, despite these coincidences, the statistical correlation between total boarding enrolments and average real farm income is not of a significant nature.*

The latter years in which enrolments declined so significantly featured not only a rural depression but also a population drift from Queensland rural areas to larger provincial and industrial centres. Rural labourers and station hands formed the bulk of this exodus and are not expected to return to the country in any great numbers. On the other hand, most of those with capital investments in rural areas of the State have remained on the land. For those in this group, the parents questionnaire indicated that choice of LAFH facility was not responsive to variations in family income. This suggests that while there have been losses of isolated rural boarders, the bottom of the trough has probably been reached and numbers seem likely to stabilise in the short term at around existing levels.

Even in 1974, isolated students only provided some 44% of total boarding enrolments. Another important component was made up of indigenous and expatriate students from Papua New Guinea. As indicated in Chapter III actual numbers of such students attending Queensland boarding schools in 1974 were not available. It was suggested though that their numbers may have declined from around 3 000 to less than 300 during the 1970's. The decline in this component is irreversible.

It is difficult to establish relativities when source statistics are so vague, but in brief, the outlook for boarding school enrolments cannot be regarded optimistically. Most indicators seem to suggest that total enrolments will settle at around current levels. This in turn suggests a need to attract new groups of clients and rationalise current boarding capacity so that supply approximates demand more closely. Two groups of boarders which have recorded increased numbers are aborigines under the Commonwealth Aboriginal Grants Assistance Scheme, and children from difficult family situations.

Some schools have reacted to the decline in boarders by shutting down completely or by closing some of their boarding wings to reduce maintenance costs. Others have faced the increased competition for boarders by improving and enlarging their boarding facilities. Since 1974 these activities have resulted in an overall decline in boarding places of around 550, the vast majority of which occurred in the catholic system. Thus at current enrolment and capacity levels there would be something like 1 400 vacancies — 1 083 of these in the independent system.

Because the number of current vacancies was so high, a follow-up study was undertaken to try to break down boarding trends by level of education. This involved a survey of ten catholic schools and six independent schools for which year level enrolments were available for the period 1976-78. The results of the survey are shown in Table 6.2.

Not unexpectedly the data indicated a continued downward trend in overall boarding enrolments; however the size of the decline at year 8 levels was particularly marked and must be a source of concern to boarding schools. It seems to imply that fewer students are entering

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* The actual correlation for the period 1970-78 was calculated at $r = 0.4289$
See Appendix 6 for the values used.

Table 6.2: Survey of year level enrolment trends in selected boarding schools, 1976-78

Year Level	*Enrolments*			
	1976	*1978*	*Difference*	*Percentage Change (%)*
8	502	462	−40	−7·9
9	556	536	−20	−3·6
10	543	533	−10	−1·8
11	482	504	+22	+4·6
12	404	434	−30	−7·4

boarding school at the traditional year 8 entrance level. This may be because parents are keeping their children home longer owing to inflationary cost pressures and the fact that government education facilities for years 8-10 are more widely distributed geographically. Furthermore, while it is interesting and encouraging to note that enrolments increased at the year 11 level, the reason for this is not so readily apparent. It might however, be an outcome of parental perception of the need for a year 11 education in the current economic climate of declining employment opportunities.

THE STANDARD OF BOARDING SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

Generally speaking the standard of accommodation offered at boarding schools is superior to that offered by student hostels both in terms of the quality of the facilities and the extent and expertise of the associated pastoral care. There are of course exceptions and one or two hostels may well provide better quality accommodation than some of the smaller, poorer boarding schools. The following paragraphs examine the quality of boarding school accommodation on offer to isolated country students.

It is difficult to relate the standard of accommodation available in boarding schools in precise terms because the quality of facilities varies quite considerably from school to school. It would be fair to say however, that the approach of individual schools to the problem of accommodating boarders largely depends on three factors:

(a) the age and type of facilities already in existence;
(b) the boarding school staff situation; and
(c) the school's financial situation and outlook.

As indicated earlier most boarding schools are quite old and in many cases are virtually locked into turn-of-the-century building designs which are often extremely difficult to upgrade and modernise. When the possibility does exist, the alternatives are usually very expensive. As a result many schools were found to have antiquated boarding facilities and antiquated institutional arrangements which appear inappropriate with present expectations and standards. For example, according to a survey conducted by Civil and Civic in 1976, some 72% of students in PMSA schools were dissatisfied with the boarding facilities available to them.[3]

Until recently, no Commonwealth funds were available to improve boarding facilities and this lack of assistance contributed to certain anomalies. By way of example, boarders may have access to a modern laboratory and an excellent auditorium, yet have to sleep in large turn-of-the-century dormitories on poorly sprung beds, with little personal furniture and no privacy. Toilet blocks, kitchens and laundries were also frequently in need of repair and maintenance. It is considered that poor facilities like these not only alienate some boarders but must be inefficient and expensive to operate. The following paragraphs discuss some of these deficiencies in more detail and compare and contrast these with the modern

facilities and approaches adopted in some of the more progressive and financially well established boarding schools.

In some of the boarding schools that were visited, students were accommodated in large dormitories which housed around 50 students. Usually they were found in boys schools and catered for students in the primary and junior secondary school years. These dormitories gave the general impression of being institutionalised and impersonal. Typically they provided rows of beds crowded quite closely to each other and only occasionally was there any bedside furniture. Clothes, etc., are usually stored in nearby locker rooms. Schools usually defended this arrangement by saying that such dormitories assisted supervision. One or two reported that they had thought of subdividing the dormitories to improve the situation but that their architects had informed them that the design of the basic structure did not lend itself to anything but an open-area dormitory. Apparently any moves to partition the area would have resulted in light, heat and ventilation problems. Most schools with large dormitories also stated that the younger secondary students seemed to prefer the group sleeping arrangements and appreciated the company. However the Civil and Civic study showed 93% of student boarders in PMSA schools showed a preference for small cubicles over large dormitories.[4] Could the quality of boarding arrangements offered to the younger children be a factor in the fall-off in the year 8 enrolments reports above? There is no data available to confirm or deny this but it seems to be a matter which might be given further consideration by schools. There appears to be a need for schools to strike a better balance between economics and the quality of living.

The approach to quality of living for the older students was generally much improved and included increased privacy, private study areas, and better quality facilities. Outcomes have varied from the conversion of old institutionalised dormitories in some way or other to the construction of new boarding wings with motel-like rooms for individual boarders.

One school which converted a turn-of-the-century stone building into more private quarters achieved very little because the quality of facilities remained spartan. However, the school claimed that living in a community with few creature comforts helped mould character. It was fairly evident that the age and design of the building combined with its total lack of soft furnishings would have meant that the dormitory would have been very cold in winter and hot and stuffy in summer.

By comparison, a girls school which fortunately had the necessary resources, constructed a new three storey brick building overlooking parkland for its senior students. each girl had her own individual room with a high standard of furnishings, drapes and wall to wall carpets. There were also separate lounge and common rooms where the students could relax.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this comparison of facilities is that the two schools mentioned above were charging their boarders approximately the same fees. This is difficult to understand given the boarding facilities described, yet it is a fact that both schools are reasonably well patronised. Presumably there are other advantages apart from the quality of boarding facilities which attract parents to such schools. It should also be pointed out that the standard of accommodation was not consistent throughout the two schools mentioned. The boarding wings described represented the best and worst available at those particular schools.

Overall, the worst facilities were found in boys schools which seems to indicate that boys may be more ready to accept basic standards of living. The girls schools on the other hand, almost without exception, at least tried to make the existing conditions as attractive and

homely as possible. They also encouraged their students to decorate and individualise their dormitory areas.

In summary the quality and approach to boarding facilities is far from uniform; indeed it varies not only from school to school but also between dormitories in the same school where critical factors may be the age or sex of the student concerned. Moreover, a school's ability to adapt or upgrade facilities which are thought to be below par, is often restricted by difficulties associated with certain built-in problems such as the age and design of existing buildings. This problem extends beyond dormitories and is also particularly relevant to kitchens, dining rooms and laundries, where in some cases, there is also a need to replace antiquated equipment. While there is much to be done each school has its own unique set of problems.

FEES

The rising cost of fees

Data on school fees is available only for the period 1974-78 and is presented in the following tables for the years 1974, 1976, and 1978 for both boarding school systems. As schools often charge different fees for different grades and as the purpose of this analysis is essentially comparative, the representative fee chosen for each school was the highest fee charged. This usually equated to fees for years 11 and 12. Table 6.3 shows that average boarding and tuition fees in independent schools increased by 65% compared with 73% for catholic schools. The average increase for all boarding schools in Queensland was 69%. Of the two systems, catholic school fees are usually the lower, averaging out at around 60% of independent school fees.

Table 6.3: Average annual boarding fees by system, 1974-78

	1974	*1976*	*1978*	*Percentage increase 1974-78*	*Percentage increase CPI Brisbane*
	($)	($)	($)	(%)	(%)
Average catholic fee[a]	859	1 215	1 486	73	63.3
Average independent fee	1 449	2 127	2 397	65	63.3
State average	1 185	1 720	2 001	69	63.3

[a] The catholic figures exclude fees charged by the small rural convents.

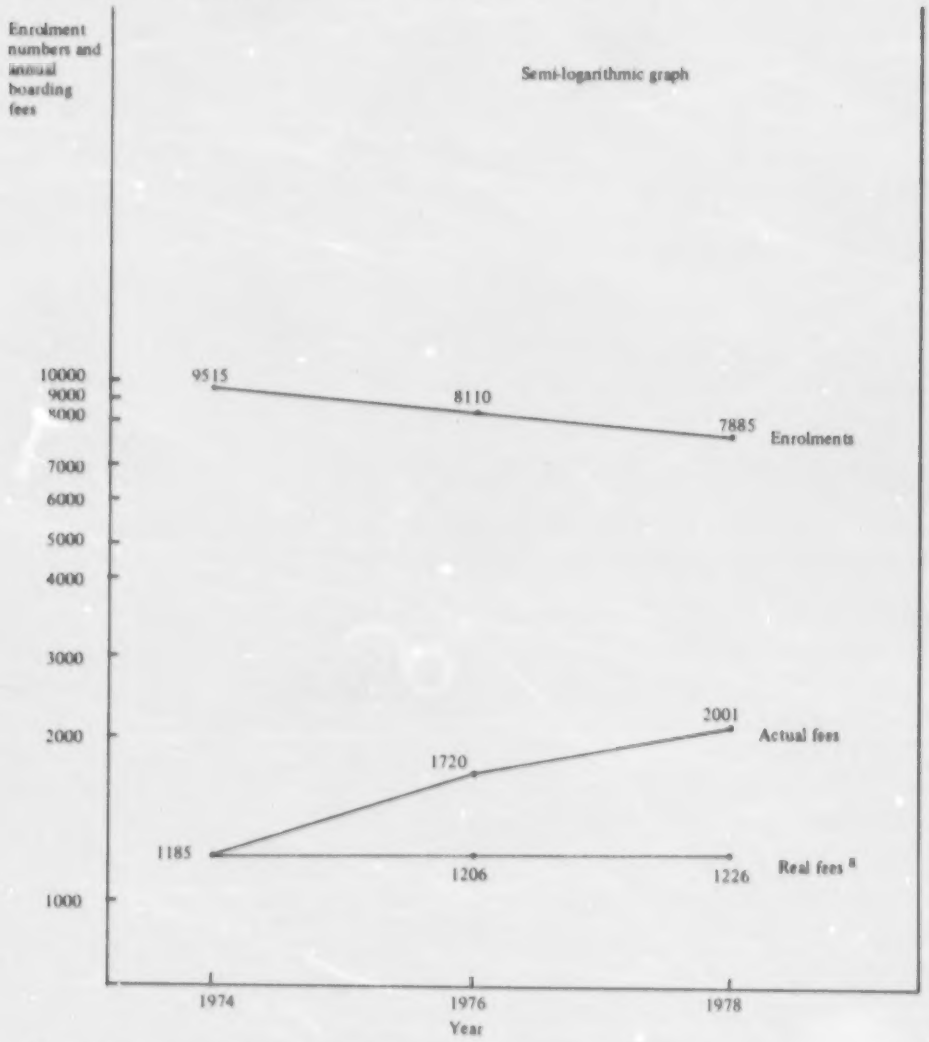
Two main points emerge from the above analysis. The first is that boarding school fees have increased significantly in actual terms in recent years. The second is that these increases have only been slightly in excess of those recorded by the Consumer Price Index for Brisbane. The rate of growth of fees was 3.7% greater than the rate of growth of the CPI. This means that fees grew by 3.7% in real terms.

A third point worthy of mention became apparent during collation of the data for Table 6.3. It concerns the large variations in fee schedules observed by different schools and is illustrated in Table 6.4. On average, the highest fee was usually more than two and a half times the lowest fee charged by schools each year.

If the figures recorded are accurate* it would appear that despite an increased differential in money terms, the gap between the highest and lowest fee schools has shrunk in

* This comment relates to the query in Chapter VII regarding the accuracy of some data provided by the schools.

Figure 6.5: Declining boarding enrolments and rising fees, 1974–78



[a] Real fees are expressed in terms of 1974 prices

Note: The correlation between total boarding enrolments and actual fees is $r = -0.9763$

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Table 6.4: Maximum and minimum annual fees, 1974-78

	1974	*1976*	*1978*	*Percentage increase 1974-78*
	($)	($)	($)	(%)
Maximum fee	1 695	2 490	2 829	67
Minimum fee	624	875	1 215	95

real terms. This would tend to indicate that the lower fee schools are the ones in greatest difficulty because they have increased their fees by 95% compared with 67% for the higher fee schools.

The relationship between declining enrolments and rising fees

The previous sections of this chapter have dealt independently with two key boarding school variables — enrolments and fees. Before leaving the subject it is appropriate to match the two together to establish if there is any correlation between them. These data are illustrated in Figure 6.5. It shows, that there is a high negative correlation ($r = 0.9763$) between total boarding enrolments and actual fees charged. Since fees only increased 3.7% in real terms, this suggests that if enrolments did decline because of increased fees, then the problem relates to the effects created by inflated values. It has already been acknowledged however, that an urban drift in Australia and the implications of Papua New Guinea's independence, were directly responsible for reducing boarding enrolments in Queensland schools since 1974. Thus while there appears to be a significant correlation between fees and enrolments, too much emphasis should not be accorded to the fact. If the theory were wholly true, fee reductions would result in increased enrolments. This is unlikely to occur.

SUMMARY

In retrospect this chapter has provided a detailed description of trends in the demand for and supply of boarding school places for rural children. It would appear that isolated students are more than adequately catered for, and indeed due to a fall off in boarding school enrolments, there are large numbers of vacancies across the State. As a consequence a number of boarding schools are in financial difficulties. A critical review of financial data extracted from the Schools Commission's 1976 statistical survey, suggests certain key problem areas and these are reviewed in Chapter VII.

References

1. Father O'Shea, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, by phone, January 1974
2. Ibid
3. Civil and Civic, *PMSA Development Strategy*, Vol. 3, Appendix 14, Part 1 Brisbane, 1976 pp 14-16
4. Ibid

Chapter VII

FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

BOARDING SCHOOL COSTS

This chapter examines the financial situation in boarding schools as represented by data extracted from the Schools Commission's 1976 statistical survey of non-government boarding schools. The Commission later collected further data for 1978 but this has not been analysed as part of this study. The financial analysis in this study covers most aspects of boarding school costs including problems of staffing, running the boarding houses and maintaining and upgrading facilities and equipment. This is followed by an analysis of boarding school revenue. Finally the implications of the relationship between costs and income are examined.

Some unexpected problems

The boarding school costs sought by the Schools Commission for the calendar year 1976 should have provided sound and reliable data for this analysis, as schools were asked to allocate the cost of each line item* across both day and boarding components. It was thought therefore, after examination of the original proforma, that sufficient data would be available to effectively exclude costs which related solely to day school pupils and so isolate the costs of running a school for boarders. Thus a commitment was made to use the data collected by the Schools Commission.

Unfortunately, when the data were examined, it became obvious that it would not be as effective as first thought. The problem related to the way in which the schools answered the various financial questions. Most schools for example, made no attempt to apportion line item costs between day and boarding pupils. In many cases the only item charged against the boarders was the actual operating costs of the boarding house itself. These data included all direct boarding costs such as the wages of catering and domestic staff, non-teaching supervisory staff and presumably the cost of linen, food and other supplies. As a result no account could be taken of the obvious expenditure incurred by boarding schools in relation to such costs as enrolling boarders, sending out term accounts, processing payments, maintaining buildings and equipment used by boarders out of school hours, and apportioning rates, taxes, power, sewerage and insurance charges. It was also obvious that questions were wrongly interpreted and that some answers were also inaccurate. Because of these unexpected problems, the ensuing financial analysis had to be more simplistic than originally anticipated. It is, nonetheless, adequate enough to allow certain conclusions to be drawn, in conjunction with data from the 1974 statistical survey and through follow-up visits to the schools.

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* Line items are shown on a sample page of a Schools Commission questionnaire. See Appendix 7.

There can be no doubt, for example, that the cost of operating boarding schools has escalated dramatically in recent years and that the resultant cost pressures have revolved around financial and management factors. These include:

(a) the steep rise in inflation since 1974 and its impact on award wages and consumer prices;
(b) the declining number of religious staff and the need to employ lay staff in their stead;
(c) the growing need to upgrade live-in facilities for staff and students; and
(d) inappropriate financial management techniques.

Consequently if schools were to maintain standards, there should have been a considerable increase in fees. Concomitantly however, the ability of rural parents to pay such fees declined. As a result of this predicament fees were ultimately increased in real terms by only 3.7 % in the period 1974-78. Thus, although facing extreme cost pressures the schools have clearly done their best to hold fees down as much as possible. Unfortunately, this has probably been achieved by a reduction in the standard of the service provided to boarders.

Recurrent expenditure

Data in connexion with recurrent expenditure encompassed costs incurred in running the school and maintaining its assets in good order and condition. This included such items as the salaries and wages of professional and non-professional staff, school administration, general running costs and boarding house costs. The data provided relates only to the 1976 calendar year and as such can only reflect the short term costs of operating the school. Consequently it may not fully indicate the costs needed to maintain a school's standard in the long term.

Total recurrent expenditure on Queensland boarding schools in 1976 amounted to nearly $29.3 million or an average of some $610 000 per school. The average cost differential between catholic and independent schools is however, quite marked at around $410 000 and $780 000 respectively. Because education is such a labour intensive industry, the reason for this marked differential may relate to the utilisation of religious staff in catholic schools. However as suggested in point (b) above, this expenditure gap could be closing.

Staffing problems

Although staffing is a major problem in most boarding schools it seems particularly acute in country and religious institutions. The difficulty is not so much in finding and paying teachers to teach the day pupils but in recruiting suitable live-in supervisory staff for the boarding houses. The problem is exacerbated by poor live-in facilities, fairly inflexible and demanding work schedules which often restrict outside personal interests, and decreased interest by lay people in community living.

Religious orders are now frequently faced with a difficult dilemma. On the one hand they have the desire and responsibility to serve their congregation but on the other, declining vocations and rising costs are making their task in boarding schools extremely difficult. As suggested above, costs begin to escalate in extraordinary fashion when religious need to be replaced by lay staff. Current figures are not available but in 1974 one school indicated on their Schools Commission questionnaire that the religious stipend was theoretically set at $2 500 per person per annum. The Queensland award for teachers in independent (i.e. non government) schools ranged from $6 300 to $11 630 in 1974. Thus the cost of replacing a religious by a lay staff member is likely to be nearly three times higher — an actual cost differential of around $6 500 for an average staff member.

The above figures relate to teaching duties only; boarding house supervisors would also need to be employed to take over the supervisory duties previously performed by the religious as part of normal daily work load. There could also be other additional costs such as the 17.5% holiday pay loading, superannuation and long service leave.

Data in the Schools Commission surveys of 1974 and 1976 indicate that the total number of religious in Queensland boarding schools fell from 278 to 228 during the two year period. For catholic schools, the number fell from 247 to 209 and for independent schools from 31 to 19. If the cost of replacing religious cited above is accepted, then the withdrawal of the 50 religious would cost the schools concerned a total of around $350 000* at 1974 prices of which 80% would fall to the catholic system. There could also be other additional costs associated with employing non-professional boarding house supervisors.

Discussions with principals during visits to schools in 1978 revealed that this trend was expected to continue, probably at an accelerated rate. One school with 20 brothers on staff anticipated only half this number would be available within five years.

Even if the financial aspects of this problem could be solved there remains the problem of finding suitable lay staff with sufficient sensitivity to the pastoral, social, and emotional needs of student boarders. Few qualified teachers seem prepared to take on this burden and schools often engage tertiary students or other young people to take on supervisory duties in return for board and accommodation. In terms of pastoral care this may well be false economy.

To most boarding institutions the process of creating an atmosphere of self-discipline, trust, encouragement, support and mutual respect is most important but it does tend to impose heavy demands on the supervisory staff. This is particularly true of untrained non-professional staff who face a range of problems. They include the need for peer group companionship, the requirement for somebody to be *'on call'* in case of an emergency, and a student body which is less than enthusiastic about a style of community living which involves a rigid code of discipline. One female student for example, confided during an interview with one of the authors, that she was *'sick and tired'* of responding to up to 40 bells per day and would like to get away from the school environment more often than she was allowed. She also felt the need to be able to retire to her dormitory occasionally to *"get away from it all"*, but the housemistress discouraged access to the dormitory between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. as this would have added to her workload. By contrast, society would permit this person to enter licensed premises and expect her to vote. Little wonder then that she is indignant at her lack of rights in the school or that the focus of her indignation tended to be the housemistress.

Privacy is also necessary for the supervisor who wants to relax in private and comfortable surroundings when off duty, in order to react rationally and effectively during duty hours. The standard of accommodation offered some supervisors would surely preclude this. Of necessity, supervisors are often placed in poor quality facilities right next to the boarders they must supervise. These conditions are unlikely to assist in attracting suitable staff.

This is not to suggest that all schools are in such a disadvantageous position. A Townsville school, for example, has mini-flats at the end of each dormitory for each full-time housemistress. The standard and quality is excellent and the school has few problems recruiting and keeping such staff. In a similar vein, a Brisbane school encourages a number of its teachers to undertake supervisory duties through the provision of houses adjacent to

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* Say 50 x $7 000 each with additional expenses included. At 1978 prices the cost of replacement would be around $570 000.

the school. Thus senior teachers with families are able to lend the school considerable support and the boys tend to benefit by being associated with a stable family situation.

At the schools visited, it almost seemed the norm for housemasters to be experienced and qualified teachers. They were usually assisted in their task by other teachers and lay supervisors. Housemistresses on the other hand, tended to be non-teachers who were either single, widowed or divorced and hence free to take on this demanding supervisory role. Most non-teacher supervisors are initially unused to dealing with groups of children and require *'on the job training'*. In this context, it was pleasing to note that the Association of Heads of Independent Girls Schools of Queensland had recognised the problem and was organising meetings for resident staff where their problems could be aired. Emphasis at these meetings is laid on developing skills in pastoral care and looking at their own relationships with the student body through role playing.

Problems also exist in respect of domestic staff who are employed in the kitchens, dining rooms, laundries and dormitories of boarding schools. The number of domestics required for these duties is often considerable. A school with 300 boarders for example, reported that it had to employ the full-time equivalent of 40 domestics to ensure the boarding house functioned smoothly.

One boarding school authority reported that it was not easy to recruit full-time domestic staff, perhaps because it is no longer perceived as a desirable occupation. The shift-work so often necessary may also discourage potential workers. As a result schools have to pay domestic staff market rates which are related to award wages for hotel/motel staff. This represents a substantial rise on what boarding schools used to pay. Most workers are employed on a casual basis but there is the need for a small core of full-time workers. Conditions for the latter group include 4 weeks recreation leave and an additional week for employees involved in shift work. All full-time workers also receive 17.5% holiday pay loading and penalty rates for Saturday and Sunday shifts.

Examples of movements in the award wages are provided below.* Waitresses and housemaids were paid $64.25 per week in June 1974 but by June 1979 this amount had increased by around 123% to $143.20. A significant factor in this increase was the granting of equal wages to females from 1 July 1975. During the same period wage rates for chief cooks and porter/yardmen increased by around 90% and 100% respectively. All of these increases would have been in excess of the growth in the CPI for the same period.

Boarding house expenditure

Boarding house expenditure may be defined as all direct boarding costs and includes the wages of domestic staff, non-teaching supervisory staff, together with the cost of linen, food and other supplies. As such it relates solely to the operating costs of the boarding house, that is, it is the recurrent cost of having students *'live-in'*. It does not necessarily reflect the cost of operating a boarding school however, as it clearly excludes a range of mandatory ancillary costs such as boarding house maintenance, sporting equipment for week-end boarders, etc.

Total expenditure on Queensland boarding houses in 1976 amounted to more than $6 million or approximately $750 per pupil per annum**. The average cost per pupil in the catholic and independent systems was $620 and $850 respectively. As before, this cost differential probably reflects the larger number of religious in catholic schools, but as the

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* Boarding house employees award rates were extracted from the Queensland Government Industrial Gazettes of 11 May 1974 and 10 February 1979.

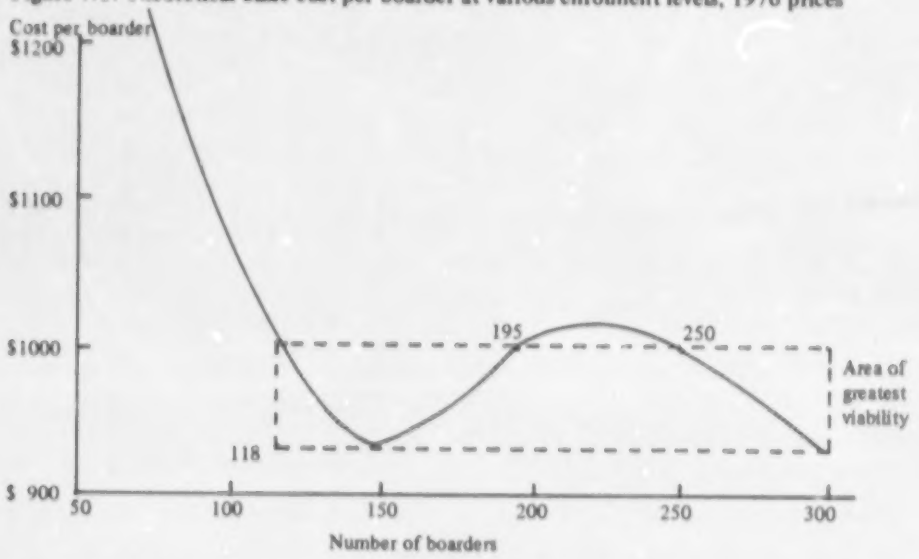
** $6 093 138 for 8 110 boarders.

number of religious is actually declining, the size of the differential will probably lessen over time.

On average, boarding houses had around 170 boarders, with actual numbers varying from 11 to 503. However as the enrolments in the two polar cases are rather unique, a better picture of the overall situation may be gleaned by excluding these schools. The result is a range varying from 25 to 360. Of the 48 schools operating in 1976, 18 had boarding house enrolments of less than 100, while 17 had enrolments between 100 and 200. Fifteen schools had enrolments of more than 200.

Cash[1] recently developed a theoretical model to assess the viability of boarding houses based on the number of boarders serviced by one indivisible unit of labour. He postulated for example that one chef, one assistant cook and three maids could service 150 boarders. They would also need one nurse, with relief, and two housemasters. On this basis, he calculated that the number of boarders which proved to be *"the most economically viable were 118 to 195 and 250 to 300"*. The exercise is illustrated in Figure 7.1. It takes account of basic costs only and as such is similar to the approach used in this report. Cash also issued two warnings: the theoretical calculations would not stand close examination; and, as all schools were different, these numbers could not be taken as a magic number operative for all.

Figure 7.1: Theoretical basic cost per boarder at various enrolment levels, 1976 prices



Source: A.H. Cash, Financial Problems and Management of Boarding Schools, Paper for NCIS Seminar, Canberra, May 1977, p. 11.

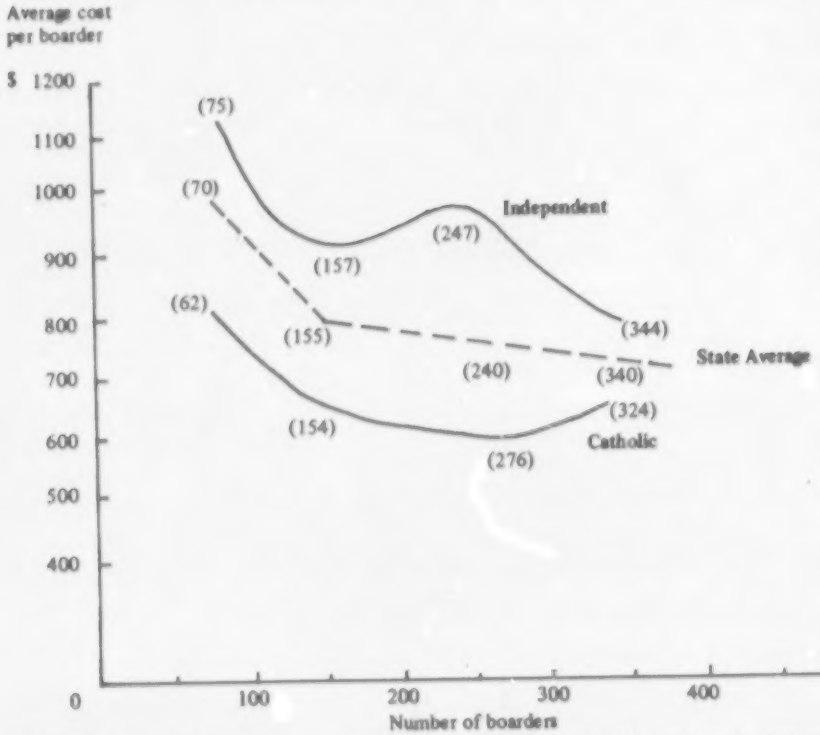
Cash[2] acknowledged that the theoretical approach could not take account of all the variables involved and so conducted a practical survey of a sample of independent boarding schools for the year 1976. He believed that despite the fact that schools differed in structure, a large enough sample would produce a reasonably valid answer on boarding profitability. Evidence derived from 8 independent schools suggested that viable numbers lay between 160-200 but the sample was not very large and contained no catholic schools which usually operate at lower costs.

As a consequence of Cash's work, Planning Branch attempted a similar analysis based on the boarding house costs reported by the relevant Queensland schools for 1976. For the purposes of the study 48 boarding schools were considered. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 7.1 and illustrated in Figure 7.2. The difference between catholic and independent costs is quite marked at all levels. It is suggested, however, that with the decline in religious vocations this differential should become less significant.

Table 7.1: Average cost per boarder by system for various enrolment levels, 1976

Enrolment levels	*No. of schools per category*	*Average cost per boarder*	*Average cost per catholic boarder*	*Average cost per independent boarder*
		($)	($)	($)
1-100	18	998	836	1 130
101-200	17	792	630	903
201-300	7	738	585	965
301-400	5	716	656	755
401-500				
501 +	1	363		363
Total average cost		750	620	850

Figure 7.2: Actual average cost per boarder by system for various enrolment levels, 1976



Note: The figures in brackets represent average enrolment for all schools in each enrolment level, e.g. average enrolment for all schools in the 1–100 bracket is 70.

It is evident that the independent schools statistics with troughs and peaks at 157 and 247, were comparable with Cash's estimated theoretical levels of 150 and 225. The catholic schools on the other hand, show continued economies of scale* to the 275 level after which there is an abrupt escalation of costs. The extent of the upturn can be attributed in the main to only two schools which are the two most prestigious in the catholic system. Thus the upturn may be a result of socio-economics rather than a negation of the principle of economies of scale. The state average for both systems shows continued declines in average cost as enrolment levels increase. Overall the data appears to support Cash's theory that boarding houses with enrolments of less than 120 may not be economic.

It should be mentioned however, that while many schools acknowledge the realities of economies of scale the overriding factor, especially in schools operated by religious orders, is service to a specific group of the community.

Income foregone

One aspect of boarding school costs which has received little consideration but does have an impact on costs, is the value of income foregone. This has taken the form of scholarships, fee discounts, remission of fees and bad debts which have accrued from non-payment of fees.

In 1974, for example, the independent boarding schools provided 322 scholarships worth $134 232. The number of scholarships ranged from zero to 65. By comparison, the catholic boarding schools provided only 117 scholarships worth $37 719, and most of these were from two Brisbane schools and one on the Darling Downs†.

Of the total 439 scholarships provided, 186 (42%) came from Brisbane schools, 136 (31%) from the Darling Downs and 67 (15%) from Ipswich. Only 50 scholarships (about 12%) were provided by country schools. It is not known if country schools can afford to be as generous or if in such schools the need for scholarships is as great. In total the value of scholarships in 1974 amounted to nearly $180 000.

Many schools also offer fee remissions for a variety of reasons which include family discounts and large remissions for children of clergy. Generous remissions have been granted on occasions when particularly deserving families were suddenly plunged into disastrous financial situations.** In 1974 the total value of all such remissions amounted to $392 000 of which the independent schools accounted for $259 000 or some 66%.

Another area of lost income arises through the non-payment of fees which for some reason parents find impossible to meet. The catholic system suffered most from bad debts when the situation was assessed in 1974. Income lost totalled $108 000 with individual school losses ranging from zero to $18 230. The independent boarding schools were not as badly affected and recorded losses of only $55 630. For individual schools these ranged from zero to $12 000.

In summary, income foregone in 1974 cost Queensland boarding schools a total of over $735 000 or $15 300 per school on average. In relative terms this is a considerable sum of money which most schools cannot afford to forego in their current financial circumstances.

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* Economies of scale occur when the marginal cost of accommodating a boarder decreases as the total number of boarders increases. Savings are derived from such essentially indivisible functions as general administration, student services and plant maintenance which do not increase proportionately with increases in enrolment.

† These scholarships are not restricted to students from isolated areas.

** e.g. unexpected crop failure, fire, etc.

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure includes the cost of acquiring a fixed asset and placing it in a condition suitable for school use. Some examples of capital expenditure include classroom furniture, science equipment, alterations to buildings and the development of new grounds. As capital costs are usually quite high they tend to be met through the use of loan funds.

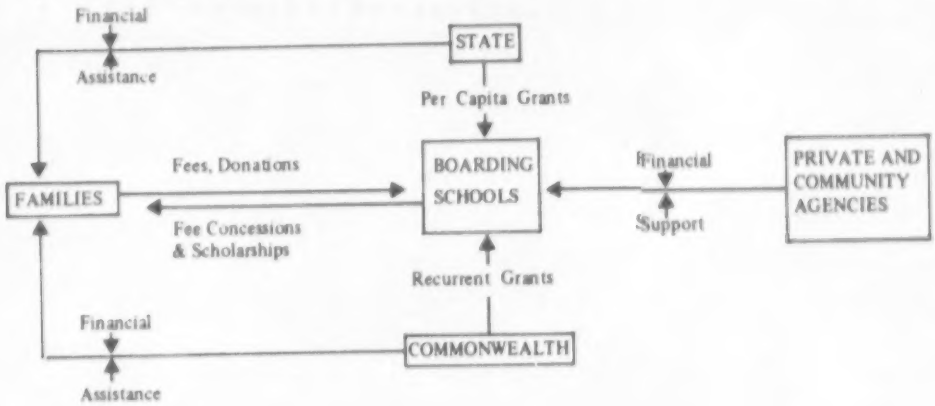
In 1976, $6 080 900 was spent on capital projects in Queensland boarding schools — approximately $127 000 per school. The individual expenditure ranged from $8 740 to $850 499. The independent schools' share of this expenditure was 53%.

Indications are that most of this expenditure was funded by loan moneys because at the end of 1976 outstanding loans exceeded $11 million — nearly double the actual capital expenditure in 1976. The average loan per school was just over $230 000 with individual loans ranging from zero (for 7 schools) to $879 994. Yet despite expenditure of this magnitude, there is still an urgent need for an extended and upgraded capital program in many schools.

BOARDING SCHOOL INCOME

Boarding school income came from various sources including school fees, government grants and subsidies, and private donations. Such income was used to meet current operational expenses. Any surpluses were usually set aside for capital purposes. Capital income was also consolidated by Government loans and grants, bank loans and interest remissions, various donations for capital purposes and proceeds from the sale of fixed assets. The various income sources are illustrated in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3: Source of boarding school income, 1976



Boarding and tuition fees

Table 7.2 details the total recurrent incomes for the State by boarding sector in 1976 and shows that, on average, parents provided 66% of income by way of tuition and boarding fees.* A further five per cent was derived from fund raising activities and financial support by private and community agencies. The remainder was provided by government agencies with the State and Commonwealth governments providing 11% and 18% respectively. Total

* However government subsidies in the form of scholarships and allowances assist some parents in this regard. See page 85

recurrent income in 1976 amounted to nearly $32 million which exceeded the total recurrent expenditure of $29.3 million* by $2.7 million (8%).

Table 7.2: Sources of income for each type of boarding school, 1976

	Catholic		*Independent*	
	($)	*(%)*	*($)*	*(%)*
Tuition fees [a]	1 974 152	20	10 373 846	48
Boarding fees [a]	3 168 281	31	5 458 621	26
State grants	1 414 572	14	2 014 353	9
Federal grants	2 870 221	28	2 649 904	12
Other	689 912	7	940 173	4
Total	10 117 138		21 436 897	

Table 7.3 compares the overall results on a per capita basis to equalise the conditions of analysis and evaluation between the two boarding systems. Once again however there was a large differential in tuition fees with catholics paying only 27% of those charged in independent schools.** In total, the average catholic boarder paid $1 152 board and tuition fees compared with $2 038 by the average independent school boarder. As this represents a fee differential of $886 per student per annum the question arises as to how such a margin can occur.

One obvious answer is that the employment of religious reduced the wage bill considerably. Another relates to the determination of the catholic system to regulate fees to minimal levels in the interest of providing a catholic education to children of adherents. This suggests that catholic boarding schools are consciously trying to relate fees to the ability of parents to pay. If so, this could account for their worsening financial position, since the cost of operating schools has continued to increase in line with the Consumer Price Index while real farm income continued to decline.

Table 7.3: Sources of income on a per capita basis for each type of boarding school, 1976

	Catholic [b]		*Independent* [c]	
	($)	*(%)*	*($)*	*(%)*
Tuition fees [a]	223	20	831	48
Boarding fees [a]	929	31	1 207	26
State grants	160	14	160	9
Federal grants	325	28	212	12
Other	78	7	75	4

[a] As already indicated fee payments are subsidised by both the State and Commonwealth Governments in certain cases.
[b] Boarding fees divided by 3 412 boarders; other categories divided by total student numbers of 8 841.
[c] Independent figures were 4 524 and 12 477 respectively.

Government grants and subsidies

That the State and Federal Governments played a major role in supporting Queensland boarding schools in 1976 is shown in Table 7.2. Their contributions totalled approximately $9 million which was almost a third of school income. Additional contributions of around $600 000 were also made in respect of capital works programs in these schools. Current government policy regarding assistance to boarding schools is outlined below.

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* See section on Recurrent Expenditure, p. 77.

** $223 compared with $831 in independent schools.

The State Government provides assistance in the form of per capita grants and assistance with interest charges on capital loans. The per capita grant is payable on account of students domiciled in Queensland or N.S.W. and is reviewed annually. The size of the grant is calculated on the basis of pupil numbers and recurrent costs for state schools. The rate of payment in 1978 was $165 per primary student and $252 per secondary student. Table 7.2 above, shows that the value of these grants in 1976 was around $3.5 million.

The State Government also pays interest charges to a maximum of 7% on building costs incurred by non-government schools for approved projects which provide additional essential teaching space or residential accommodation, subject to certain conditions. The interest payments are made for a period of 5 years on the original capital reducing by one-fifth each year. The total paid to non-government boarding schools in 1976 amounted to $310 097 or about 1% of total recurrent income. In addition endowments totalling $142 800 were paid to certain independent schools under the Grammar Schools Act. This means that something like 12.5% of the recurrent income of boarding schools in 1976 was provided by the State Government.

The Commonwealth Government provides additional direct assistance to these schools by way of general recurrent grants distributed by the Schools Commission. The Commonwealth scheme is very complicated and seeks to establish a firm base for government support of non-government schools by way of a subsidy scheme linked to government school costs.

Within Australia-wide guidelines, schools are divided into appropriate subsidy levels in relation to the particular circumstances of that school. These divisions are decided by State Planning and Finance Committees which are composed of members with local knowledge and expertise. The subsidy levels range from one to six. In 1976 level 1 schools received $108 per secondary school student and this increased to $338 per student in level 6 schools. The average grant for Queensland non-government schools in 1976 was $177. Individual school levels may be reviewed from time to time and recurrent grants per capita varied accordingly[3]. In 1976 these grants totalled $5 520 125 or around 17% of total recurrent income for Queensland's boarding schools.

Commonwealth grants have also been available, on application, for capital works projects such as general building projects, new classrooms, library refurnishing, etc., and in 1976 exceeded $600 000 for the schools under review. The use of such funds was extended to student accommodation facilities in 1977 but only to those schools catering for country students. This was an important policy change in view of the critical state of many boarding facilities and the need for schools to upgrade them.

In summary, the statistical data showed that the State and Federal Governments provided nearly one third of the schools' total income. Two-thirds came ostensibly from the parents via fees and donations. The qualification is used because both governments provide financial assistance to isolated parents and as a result effectively subsidise their fees. Assuming that 40% of boarders in 1976* were from isolated families and that each received only the basic (non-means tested) allowances of say $650, then at least $2 million or 10% of contributions from parents actually came from the government. This would lift government contributions to around 35% of total school income. Both governments also have additional means-tested allowances for students from low income families which could provide up to $2 500 extra per eligible student. It is clear therefore, that significant government funding

* Based on Schools Commission Survey data of 1974. It is estimated that 3 250 isolated students were at boarding schools in Queensland in 1976.

was provided to boarding schools in 1976 through both direct and indirect means. Catholic schools in particular, because of their relatively low parent contributions, would have depended heavily on this assistance.

FINANCIAL VIABILITY OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

The viability index

While non-government educational institutions obviously need to make profits in the economic sense in order to maintain their operations, it is inappropriate to suggest that these institutions are driven by the profit motive. Presumably their financial intent is to neatly cover their costs after providing the best service possible to their clients. The quality of this service of course depends on the amount of income which can be derived from these clients. There is evidence that schools have deliberately attempted to keep their fees as low as possible to assist families to attend. In these circumstances it seemed advisable to devise a single statistical indicator to assess the financial position of schools as accurately as possible but in non-commercial terms. The outcome of this need is the viability index.

The viability index was derived initially by establishing total recurrent income as a percentage of total recurrent expenditure and then allowing a 10% margin for depreciation and future contingencies. By way of example, a school with an income of $112 000 and an expenditure of $100 000 would have a viability index of 102*. Under this system the initial index of 112% was further reduced by 10 points to derive an index which would reflect a school's long term viability rather than its short term profitability. In other words the index not only shows whether a school is in a deficit situation but also indicates the extent of its malfunction. For example, if two schools had indices of 95 and 80, it is clear that the deficit incurred by the latter, compared with its total turnover, is much greater.

After deriving a viability index for each of the 48 boarding schools that were considered for the study, it became apparent that only 22 schools could be considered viable. This number was made up of 14 catholic schools and 8 independent schools and their indices ranged from 101 to 145. The modal value was 103. The remaining 26 schools could not be considered viable on the basis of their 1976 financial data. The latter schools were made up of 8 catholic schools and 18 independent schools and their indices ranged from 68 to 100. The modal value for schools thought to be non-viable in 1976 was 89. Viability in 1976 will not necessarily mean that the school is viable in 1979 or vice versa. Another disadvantage is that the index does not take account of accrued savings or the value of land holdings, etc. It is an indicator based only on cash flow in 1976 and as such is limited in nature. Notwithstanding, it does provide a vehicle for assessment and comparison and some of the key results are summarised in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4: Key results of the viability index, 1976

	Viable	*Non-viable*
Total schools	22	26
— catholic	(14)	(8)
— independent	(8)	(18)
Index range	101-145	68-100
Index mode	103	89

* $\frac{112}{100} \times \frac{100}{1}$ = 112% *less* the 10% margin = 102.

A detailed examination of 9 key variables for each school in each of the viable/non-viable groups, aimed at highlighting both weak and strong areas in schools with a view to determining appropriate corrective action, following the analysis. Unfortunately little or no significant results were achieved.

Consequently the top and bottom quartiles of the entire range of schools were isolated on the basis of their viability indexes and the schools re-compared across the 9 key variables. Once again nothing significant emerged from the statistical comparison.* However, schools in the top quartile had a boarder occupancy rate of 93% compared with only 70% for schools in the bottom quartile. Other differentials clearly related to the different operating styles of the catholic and non-catholic systems and in particular to the effective subsidisation of catholic running costs through the use of religious staff.

The relative failure of this comparative analysis suggests that the variables chosen were not in themselves significant. That there is no significant measurable difference between viable and non-viable schools is also apparent. The second conclusion may be closer to the truth and would mean in effect that a number of intangible factors contribute to a school's success. It is suggested that the key factor is *'quality'* — quality of education, quality of facilities, quality of performance, quality of management, etc. If so, these results were consistent with the principal choice factor recorded by parents in the parents questionnaire, namely 62% of parents with at least one child in boarding school chose high standard of education as the principal reason affecting their choice.

Patterns of survival

As mentioned previously a representative sample of schools were visited in 1978 and discussions with principals usually served to illustrate the individuality of the institution being visited. A keynote of this individuality was the different patterns of innovations and sacrifices adopted by the schools in order to survive.

Some of the more notable innovations included the employment of a school building and maintenance crew in combination with a policy of a continual upgrading of boarding facilities, and the employment of a full-time public relations officer to maintain contact with country parents and personally gauge their requirements.

In contrast some schools were surviving by charging low boarding fees to maintain enrolment levels or through having a large day component which was able to subsidise the school's boarding operations. Such schools frequently had no building programs and effected little or no maintenance.

Some other survival techniques included strong support from parent/community groups, consolidation of boarding numbers at an economic level** and the decision to go co-educational or amalgamate with brother or sister schools.

SUMMARY

In summary it would appear that boarding schools are facing major financial difficulties as a result of declining boarding enrolments, problems associated with recruiting and keeping suitable live-in supervisors and problems created by the age of many of their buildings and facilities.

To offset these difficulties, schools need to know the future availability of boarders, the extent to which fees can be increased without losing clientele and a good direction for future

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* The results of this analysis are shown in Appendix 8.

** Principals suggested an economic boarding level lay between 100-200 depending on the school and its resources.

development. They will also undoubtedly need low-interest capital investment funds to upgrade many of their facilities.

The schools themselves seem confident that their problems can be solved if the State and Commonwealth Governments take an increased interest in their situation. Some of the measures suggested by schools are listed below:

(a) assurance that the present levels of government assistance would at least be maintained;
(b) increased recurrent assistance for the day school;
(c) consideration of per capita grants for capital purposes and /or maintenance as in student hostels;
(d) consideration of low interest government loans for needed capital works programs;
(e) endowments and subsidies along the lines of the financial assistance extended to grammar schools by the State Government under the Grammar Schools Act;
(f) more direct assistance to the school rather than to the parents;
(g) more financial assistance to isolated parents and a broadening of the definition therein to include more country students and possibly city students with only one parent or those affected by broken homes.
(h) subsidisation of lay staff employed to replace the declining number of religious staff.

While most of these are well considered propositions, many relate to the particularly difficult circumstances in a minority of schools only. In other words it is extremely difficult to suggest any one solution which will effectively solve all problems in all schools. As the future demand for boarding facilities is unlikely to grow much beyond current levels, some of the problems may need to be solved within the industry itself through consolidation, amalgamation and increased efficiency.

References

1 Cash, A.H. *Financial Problems and Management of Boarding Schools*, Paper for NCIS Seminar, Canberra, May 1977.
2 Ibid, p 11.
3 Schools Commission, *Report: Rolling Triennium 1977-79*, Canberra, July 1976, pp 48-55.

Chapter VIII

PROFILE OF STUDENT HOSTELS

INTRODUCTION

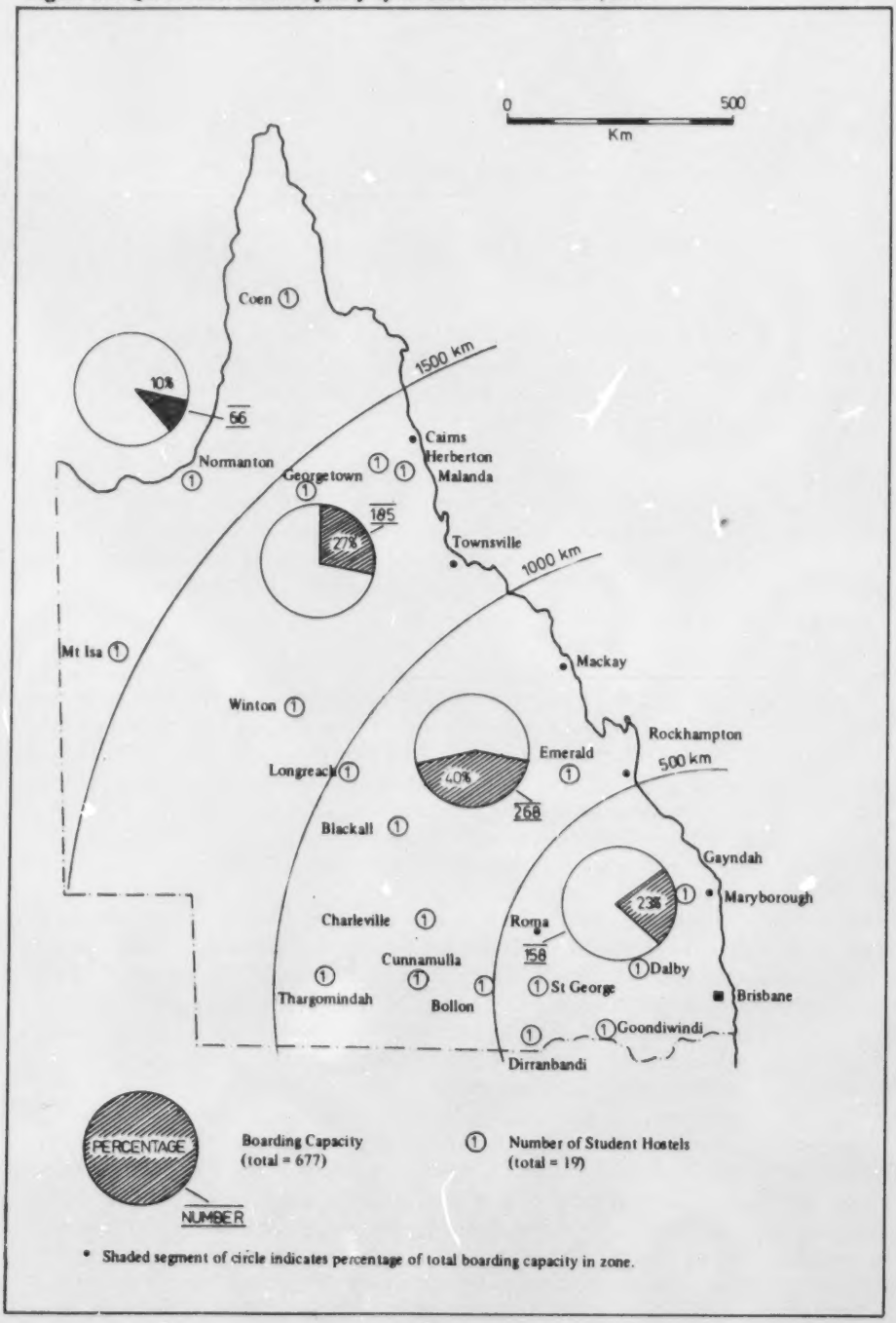
Data on student hostels were obtained by way of the hostel questionnaire cited in Chapter VI (see Appendix 10) and through personal visits to ten of the hostels. The questionnaire was constructed by Planning Branch and followed similar lines to the Schools Commission's statistical survey of boarding schools, although it was recognised that hostels would be unlikely to provide as much data as the schools. This assessment proved accurate, although all hostels responded to the questionnaire and a follow-up program of visits was conducted which included 50% of the hostels. However as a result of data collection problems this chapter is somewhat sparser than the previous examination of boarding schools. Nevertheless the available data provides a fairly concise snapshot of hostels, and permits some comparisons which illustrate the basic differences between hostels and boarding schools.

To begin with, there are major locational differences which are evident from a comparison of Figure 6.2 and Figure 8.1. These show that while 60% of boarding school capacity is within 500 km of Brisbane, nearly 80% of hostel capacity is beyond this distance. These differences may serve to explain why the vast majority of hostel boarders are from isolated areas compared with only some 34% in boarding schools. They also illustrate philosophical differences. As noted earlier in the report, many schools established boarding wings to assist isolated students to attend. Their main function however was to teach. On the other hand, hostels were also established to assist isolated students to obtain an education, but their main function was to provide relatively cheap accommodation in close proximity to established state schools.

As a result, hostels are generally cheaper than boarding schools. As most children at hostels attend state schools there are no tuition fees, and boarding fees are kept as low as possible. This is often achieved through the co-operation of several local community groups, including parents, churches, shire councils and the QCWA. On average, total hostel fees are about half the total fees charged in boarding schools. This naturally has a limiting effect on hostel budgets and as a result, the quality of facilities and supervision in hostels appears to be inferior to that provided by boarding schools.

Size and stability are two additional differences which are also probably related to isolation or distance from Brisbane. Because hostels are small and have an average enrolment of around 25, variations in the number of boarders can have a significant impact on their operations. Little margin is available for a reduction in enrolments without threatening a hostel's chances of survival. Boarding schools, by comparison, have an average boarding enrolment of around 150 and are able, at least to some extent, to adjust their day numbers in order to subsidise their boarding operations. As a result, hostels are probably more vulnerable to adverse economic and demographic changes. Certainly the hostel survey

Figure 8.1: Queensland hostel capacity by distance from Brisbane, 1979



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showed that most hostels were suffering from declining enrolments and financial, staffing and maintenance problems. These are discussed in detail below.

HOSTEL ENROLMENTS

The overall supply of boarding places

A short outline of the historic development of student hostels was provided in Chapter III together with current locations, capacities and sponsoring bodies. At the end of 1977 there were 20 hostels operating in Queensland under the auspices of the QCWA (5), local shire councils (5), various church groups (6) and parents associations (3). Although most hostels were predominantly concerned with facilitating secondary education, primary boarders were often enrolled whenever space was available. Four of the more isolated hostels however catered for primary students only. Figure 3.6 illustrated the location of hostels at the beginning of 1979 together with their relevant education facilities. It should be noted that following the closure of the hostel at Warwick in 1978 and rationalisation at Herberton in 1979, total capacity was effectively reduced from around 770 to 677 during the two years betweem 1977 and 1979.* Approximately 50% of the 1979 places provide access to years 1-12, 35% to years 1-10 and 15% to years 1-7 only. Half of the total number of available places are for boys and half for girls and most hostels provide for children of both sexes. In 1977 there were 213 boys and 270 girls attending the 20 student hostels. Of these, 165 (34%) were primary students, 248 (51%) lower secondary and 57 (12%) in upper secondary. Clearly then, the overall supply of boarding places bears little relation these days to the actual utilisation of these places by isolated students.

The decline in boarding enrolments

During the period 1974-78, total hostel enrolments fell from 528 to 413. This represented a decline of almost 22%, a rate in excess of that experienced by boarding schools in the same period (i.e. 17%). Individual trends are illustrated in Table 8.1 and vary from gains of 86% to total closure. Data was not obtainable for the period prior to 1974 but it is known that during the last decade many hostels have closed down because of declining enrolments or financial problems (or both). They included hostels at Monto, Nambour, Stanthorpe, Tambo and Charters Towers.

From the evidence available it appears that the demand for hostels has varied over time from district to district. State-wide, demand apparently peaked in the early 1960's and then gradually declined. Reasons for the decline probably include increased government schools in rural areas, the development and extension of free school transport services, increased mechanisation in most rural industries, several downturns in the rural economy and a drift by many rural families to more urban centres.

Tables 8.2 and 8.3 show the strength of the population movement in the period 1966-1976 for those shires which are presently serviced by student hostels. Of the 18 shires involved, 12 showed substantial population losses which ranged from 4% to 30%. Most were pastoral or agricultural areas. Based on the 1966 population the average loss in these areas was 18.8% and this decline must have had some adverse affect on hostel enrolments.

* The hostel at Malanda provides accommodation free of charge to aboriginal students from the Doomagee Mission. As such it is not subject to the usual market forces and for this reason has not been included in the statistical or financial analysis of student hostels although the location and capacity are illustrated in Figure 8.1.

Table 8.1: Hostel enrolment trends, 1974-78

Hostel	*Capacity*[a]	*1974 Enrolment*	*1978 Enrolment*	*Change in Enrolment*
				(%)
A. QCWA				
Dalby	30	26	11	– 58
Gayndah	32	14	13	– 7
Emerald	60	39	36	– 8
Warwick	20[b]	16	0	– 100
Goondiwindi	53	39	27	– 31
Thargomindah	11	11	7	– 36
B. Shire				
Blackall	50	35	11	– 69
Georgetown	48	39	31	– 20
Cunnamulla	50	38	43	13
Winton	48	22	41[e]	86
Longreach	50	40	5	– 88
C. Parents				
St. George	29	13	17	31
Bollon	22	18	19	6
Dirranbandi	14	0[d]	19	[d]
D. Church				
Charleville	25	32	13	– 59
Herberton	126[c]	109	72	– 34
Mt. Isa	18	13	16	23
Normanton	24	14	15	7
Coen	24	10	17	70
Total	734[f]	528	413	– 21.8

[a] As reported at the end of 1977.
[b] Warwick closed in 1978.
[c] Herberton's capacity was reduced to 55 in 1979.
[d] The parents hostel was not open in 1974 and no records for the old hostel were available.
[e] A new hostel was built in Winton in 1977 and seems to have attracted boarders away from the neighbouring hostels in Blackall and Longreach.
[f] Excludes Malanda (34 beds) where no linear enrolment data was available.

Table 8.2: Population decreases in shires presently served by hostels, 1966-76

Shire	*Population decrease*	*Relevant hostel*
	(%)	
Blackall	30	Blackall
Winton	28	Winton
Murweh	26	Charleville
Bulloo	23	Thargomindah
Balonne	22	St. George
Balonne	22	Bollon
Balonne	22	Dirranbandi
Paroo	20	Cunnamulla
Longreach	19	Longreach
Gayndah	12	Gayndah
Etheridge	7	Georgetown
Herberton	4	Herberton

Source: ABS census data 1966 and 1976.

Population increases were recorded in six of the shires but generally these changes would not have assisted the relevant hostel. Three of the major gain areas were based on new or increased mining activity and the fourth was based on the establishment and growth of the fishing town of Karumba. The mining towns all have their own year 1-12 facilities and Karumba has its own primary school. The other increases at Goondiwindi and Dalby were only marginal.

Table 8.3: Population increases in shires presently served by hostels, 1966-76

Shire	*Population increase* (%)	*Relevant hostel*
Emerald	71	Emerald
Cook	61[a]	Coen
Mt. Isa City	50	Mt. Isa
Carpentaria	47[b]	Normanton
Waggamba	6	Goondiwindi
Wambo	2	Dalby

Source: ABS census data 1966 and 1976.
[a] Weipa accounted for 98% of this growth
[b] Accounted for principally by growth in the townships of Normanton and Karumba

As with boarding schools, it is difficult to see any prospect of a reverse in the downward trend of declining hostel enrolments. Quite apart from demographic trends, it is also clear that parents and students alike prefer to utilise the free school buses where they are available, in preference to paying around $1 000 per annum to live away from home in hostels. Moreover, it is also clear that sponsoring agencies are becoming less able to bear the burden of keeping hostels open. A good example of this is the QCWA which had 18 hostels in 1963 but only 5 by the end of 1977. Problems associated with recruiting younger women volunteers, a declining membership and financial problems appear to have been key factors in this demise. This was highlighted by the *"Warwick Daily News"* of 4 October 1978

> *"After 56 years of service . . . the Warwick branch QCWA is no more . . . the branch suffered its biggest blow in January this year when it was reluctantly decided to close the students' hostel due to financial problems caused by . . . new secondary schools in country centres and transportation of students to these areas, thus rendering the hostel obsolete."*

THE STANDARD OF HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION OFFERED

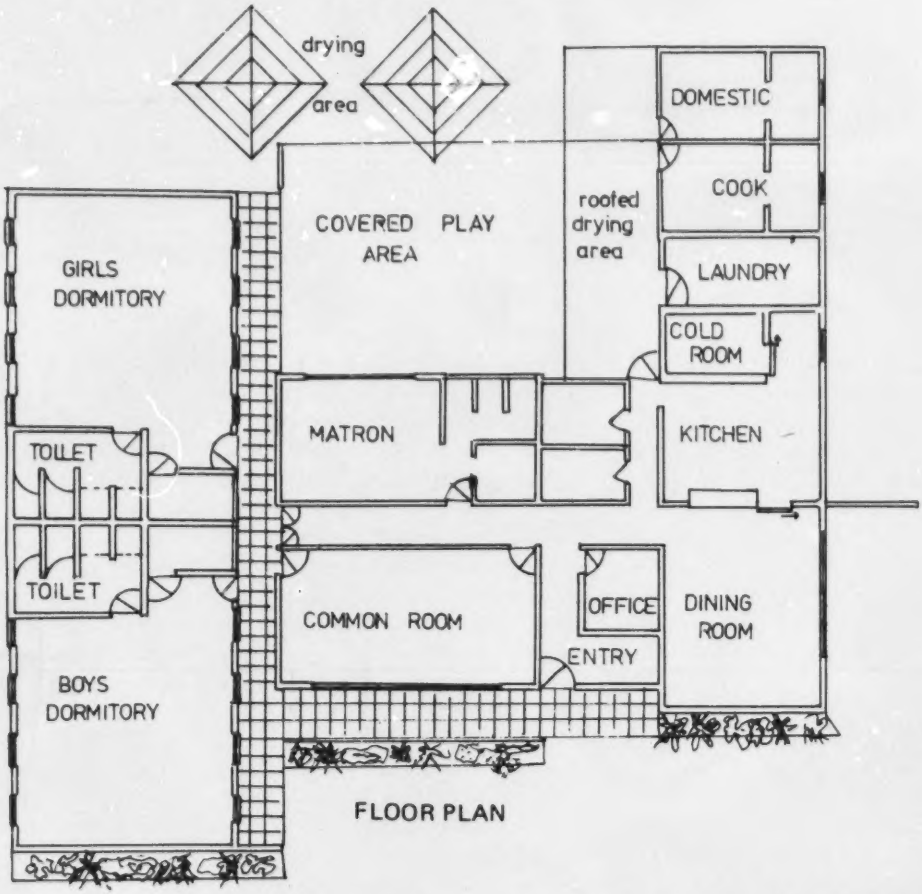
As noted earlier, the standard of hostel accommodation is generally inferior to that offered by boarding schools both in terms of the quality of the facilities and the quality of the pastoral care. The latter will be discussed later in this chapter under the heading of '*staffing problems*.' In the following paragraphs the quality of hostel facilities which were observed by the research team during visits will be discussed.

For convenience, hostels may be classified into two categories which depend on the nature of their buildings. On one hand some buildings were designed and built specifically as student hostels, but on the other, some have been set up in existing buildings or houses which were modified for the purpose. The latter are in the majority. Most new buildings are either owned or subsidised by local shire councils.

The following paragraphs describe a fairly typical example of a building designed specifically for hostel purposes. The hostel was established in the late 1960's in far north Queensland and is currently valued at around $120 000. Although it has a capacity of around 50, it is usually only two-thirds full. It offers accommodation for both boys and girls of primary school age. The hostel gave the visiting research team the general impression that it was a comfortable well maintained facility, set in attractive lawns and gardens. Figure 8.2 shows a floor plan, which illustrates the layout of this relatively modern and functional hostel.

The buildings were constructed of modern fibro-asbestos cement and had an attractive external appearance. Dormitories and living areas were linked by covered breezeways which provided a pleasant and practical division between sleeping and living areas. The dormitory

Figure 8.2: An example of a well designed student hostel



blocks were roomy, well ventilated, fly-screened, and appeared to be quite comfortable. Adequate storage and hanging space was available for each child in the dormitories and toilet facilities which were adjacent were clean and obviously well maintained.

The hostel kitchen was large, appeared to be of functional design, was well equipped, and was scrupulously clean. It was serviced by a large cold room and deep freeze. The kitchen was separated from the dining room by a laminated servery. According to parents from the area, the hostel had a reputation for providing well prepared and well balanced meals.

The hostel had a recreation room which was also used as a homework room. It was well furnished and contained a TV set and a small library. Homework was supervised either by a resident teacher or council office employee. Outside, the grounds were spacious and quite suited to outdoor recreation. An adventure playground was sited near some large shade trees and a covered recreation area provided an alternative for wet weather activities. As well, children used the school playground which was nearby, and the town swimming pool. Another interesting recreational touch was piped music, which was made available to all areas of the hostel.

A very important feature of this hostel was the modern motel style accommodation provided for the matron. Similar accommodation was available for a live-in teacher or office worker in return for a nominal rent and supervisory duties. This arrangement contrasted markedly with that of another small hostel where the matron was the sole supervisor and lived in a small room unsuitably located between the girls and boys toilets.

In contrast to this hostel, the majority are old buildings which have been converted. They have several deficiencies, some of which are reflected in the following comments which were taken from individual replies to the hostel questionnaire:

(a) *"the estimated cost of renovations for satisfactory operations is in excess of $250 000;"*

(b) *"the present hostel building is not suitable for operation as a students hostel — the dormitories consist of two old houses one of which has recently been burnt;"*

(c) *"little has been done to the hostel for years as we have hardly been able to meet costs; now there are a number of urgent repairs and costs have risen considerably;"*

(d) *"the hostel premises are aged and deteriorating and neither the local shire council nor the QCWA has the potential to command the level of funding required to bring the student accommodation back to a reasonable standard."*

After visiting many hostels in various parts of Queensland, the research team had to acknowledge the general applicability of these comments. Facilities at two hostels are described below to provide a further indication of problems with hostel accommodation as it is to-day. Both were in old, converted buildings.

The first was established in a high-set, Queensland colonial homestead which was well over half a century old. Originally it was undoubtedly a very grand old building with extensive verandahs which opened out on to a five acre allotment. To-day the grandeur has long since departed and the old home is very dilapidated and in need of urgent maintenance. There were no recreational facilities in the grounds which were uncared for. The research team was told that the hostel did not have the necessary funds to maintain the property adequately and that the local shire council was not interested in assisting them.

The downstairs portion of the old homestead had been enclosed and provided cooking, eating and recreational space. Toilet and bathroom facilities were also located downstairs. The upstairs area was used for sleeping and storage of personal belongings. Strangely however, despite the fact that there were approximately ten separate rooms available, all the students slept on a verandah with the boys and girls sleeping at opposite ends. Internally, most of the verandah was unlined and unceiled. Externally, weather protection was provided by a combination of fibro-asbestos sheeting, fly screens and old canvas blinds.

Despite its shortcomings, the hostel was clearly of strategic importance for isolated students because the town in which it was situated had a high school. It offered the only upper secondary facilities (years 11-12) in an area of around 15 000 square kilometres. However the continued survival of the hostel seems doubtful if material and financial assistance is not forthcoming.

The second hostel worthy of mention was also in such a dilapidated condition that its future remains in question. Several of its buildings, including the master's cottage, the dining and recreation halls, and some of the study rooms appeared to be so run-down that some of them should probably have been condemned. The rest of the facilities were adequate for their purpose, and despite inadequacies in the facilities, the standard of supervision and pastoral care was considered excellent. However the hostel did not have the financial resources to remedy its building deficiencies because of previous debt commitments and declining enrolments.

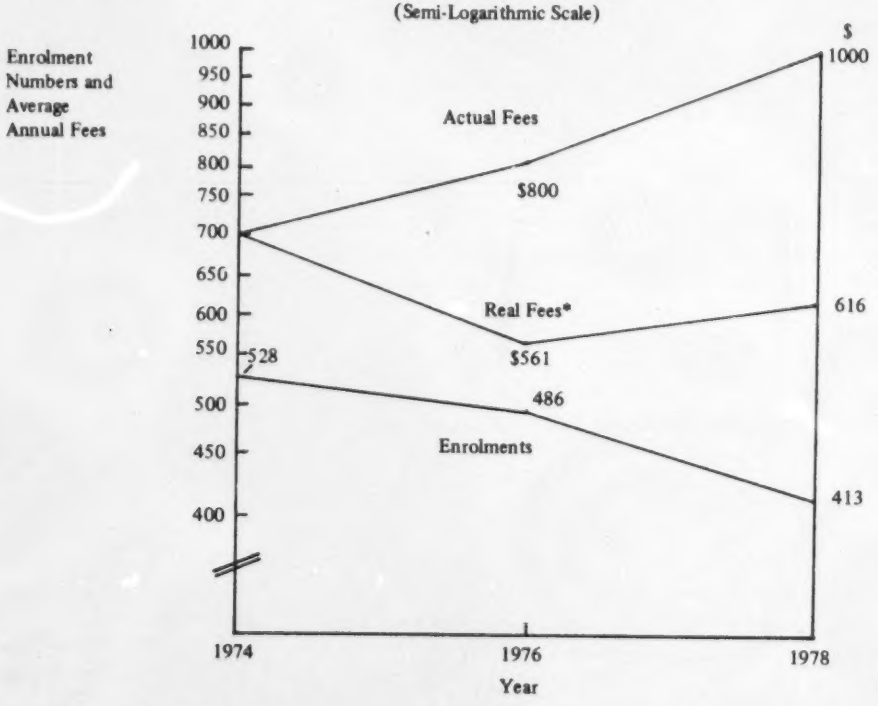
This hostel also had strategic importance as it was one of only two hostels with year 12 facilities operating north of the Tropic of Capricorn. It is known that the hostel administration has had discussions with State and Commonwealth government officials regarding the hostel's future but as yet no firm decision has been made. Future directions seem to range from total closure to total redevelopment and, at the moment, this decision seems as if it will hinge on the extent of government assistance available.

FEES

The rising cost of fees and their impact on enrolment

Data on hostel fees were procured for the period 1974-78 and as for boarding schools, fees were usually higher for older children. As before, the representative fee chosen for purposes of illustration for each hostel was the highest fee charged. On average, hostels charge about half the fees due in boarding schools and this is in line with their philosophy of keeping fees as low as possible. Nevertheless, some hostels were actually found to be more expensive than some of the catholic boarding schools.

Figure 8.3: The relationship between hostel enrolments and fees 1974–78



Note: (i) Average Fees were rounded to the closest $100. Actual determinations confused by 5 day hostels.
(ii) *1974 = 100; subsequent years deflated by C.P.I. increases.
(iii) Real increase = $\frac{\text{Actual Increase}}{\text{CPI Increase}} = \frac{1.43}{1.63} = 0.88 = -12\%$ in real terms.

Figure 8.3 summarises average annual hostel fees for the period 1974-78 and shows how they varied in actual and real terms as in Figure 6.5 for boarding schools. Average annual fees rose during this time from around $700 to $1 000 per student but the 43% increase was not as high as that recorded by the consumer price index. In fact it would appear that hostel fees fell in real terms by about 12% in this period. all else being equal this should have resulted in at least some stability in enrolment levels. This was not the case however, as enrolments fell by around 22%. Apart from the factors considered previously, many hostels reported considerable parental opposition to any increase in fees and a number of threats to withdraw children were made. This suggests that either parent income had fallen in real terms by more than 12% or that they had become confused by the money illusion created by the actual fee increases. Either way, parents apparently see a greater percentage of their income being allocated to hostels. In 1974 for example, 8.6% of average farm income would have supported one student at an average hostel for twelve months. By 1977, the amount required had risen to 13%, principally as a result of the rural depression and declining farm incomes.

Some idea of the rising cost of fees and their impact on hostel enrolment may be gained from Figure 8.3. Other factors affecting enrolment have also been mentioned including the population drift, the increased provision of state education facilities and the declining standard of the quality of accommodation offered in some hostels. Unlike boarding schools, student hostels have no scope for bolstering their viability by accepting city children or through increasing their day component.

STUDENT HOSTEL COSTS

This section of the chapter examines the financial situation in student hostels as represented by data extracted from the hostel questionnaire and through follow-up visits to the hostels. The follow-up visits were particularly important because the majority of financial questions were poorly answered and much of the data provided in the first instance needed clarification. This data deficiency was partially rectified because many hostels allowed the research team access to financial statements prepared by their accountants. The resultant analysis of the data obtained, parallels that undertaken for the boarding schools, but is of necessity, more limited in scope and detail.

Recurrent expenditure

Total recurrent expenditure for hostels in 1976/77 amounted to $518 032 or around $30 500 per hostel. This amounts to about 5% of the recurrent expenditure incurred by the boarding schools and is yet another indicator of the relative size and standards of the two institutional arrangements. As before, recurrent expenditure encompassed the costs incurred in running the hostel and maintaining its assets in reasonable condition. This included such items as staff wages, boarding costs and general running costs. Staff wages accounted for 50% of the total cost with foodstuffs and other miscellaneous costs accounting for 25% each. In other words, $259 000 was paid to hostel managers, cooks and domestics, $129 500 was spent on food and provisions for students and live-in staff, and $129 500 was required for general running costs such as power, rates and taxes. Details of these broad areas of expenditure are discussed below.

Staffing problems

As noted in Chapter VI, the problem of staffing boarding institutions in rural areas is particularly acute, and is usually exacerbated by poor live-in facilities and fairly demanding

work schedules. For hostels, the acquisition of a suitable matron or manager is a serious problem. Forty per cent reported difficulties recruiting staff and 85% advised that supervisors finally had to be recruited from outside the local area. A number of appointees seem to have been unsuitable and in one extreme case, a hostel reported 5 changes of supervisor in 2 years. Domestic staff are not such a problem as 75% are apparently recruited locally. Inevitably staffing policies varied from hostel to hostel with the result that the staff* /student ratio varied from 1:4 to 1:10. The average was around 1:7. The smallest hostel employed 1 person*, the largest 9*. The average was 3.6* and the overall total 72*.

Basically there seemed to be two categories of hostel employee and this usually had a bearing on the quality of staff hired and the remuneration paid. The first group were classified as shire council employees and were usually paid award wages. Competition for such jobs was usually fairly keen. The second group came under the heading of charitable organisation employees. They worked in hostels organised by church groups, parents associations and the QCWA and by comparison were paid relatively meagre wages. In 1976/77, for example, average full-time equivalent payment scales were around $7 000 and $3 000 respectively.

Applicable wage rates for boarding house staff are illustrated for comparative purposes by reference to the Queensland Government Gazette of August 1977. They are set down in Table 8.4 which shows the award rates for staff with managerial responsibility, together with cooks, domestics and yardmen.

Table 8.4: Award wages for boarding house employees, 1977

Class of employee	*Award wages*[a]
	($)
Supervisor	6 878
Housemaid, Janitor, Yardman	6 536
Single-hand Cook	6 849

[a] There were also district loadings of 1% to 3%

Why then do charitable institutions pay their staff less than half the going rate when it clearly affects recruitment and impinges on the quality of staff available? The answer undoubtedly relates to the small amounts of money available and the need to keep costs as low as possible if the hostels are to survive. As a result, hostels tend to recruit matrons who are old age pensioners and cannot earn more than a stipulated amount without adversely affecting their social security payments. In 1977 the Commonwealth pension was $2 564. Thus in combination with their hostel salary of around $3 000, these matrons would have earned in the vicinity of $5 500 or about $1 500 below the award equivalent and district zone allowance. In other words, some of the charitable institutions seem to have found a way of securing a Commonwealth subsidy for their operations. No direct grants are presently payable but if people are to remain in rural areas then perhaps some thought should be given to officially assisting these important rural service institutions.

Boarding house expenditure

Approximately $130 000 was spent in 1976/77 in Queensland hostels on food and provisions for students and live-in staff. On average this amounted to $7 625 per hostel which serviced 25 students and one full-time supervisor. This meant that average expenditure per person was around $300 for a 42 week school year or about $7 per week per

* full-time equivalents, not actual staff numbers.

person. This computes to around 40 cents per meal bearing in mind that some hostels only operate a 5 day week. This seemed rather low when it was considered that costs in hostel towns were about 10% higher than for the same food items in the Brisbane metropolitan area. For towns like Thargomindah, there was also the additional cost of shipping the provisions by road beyond the nearest railhead. In situations like these, parents often donated food on a rotational basis to save costs. The real effect of these donations however could not be evaluated.

A similar amount ($130 000) was also spent on rates and taxes, electricity, power, heating oil, rent, maintenance of furniture and equipment and sundry administration charges. They also averaged $7 625 per hostel or about 25% of recurrent expenditure. The greatest single cost in this category appeared to be maintenance, at least in those hostels where maintenance was carried out. This is probably not surprising when it is considered that rural building costs are often 50% higher than in Brisbane. On the other hand, it was also discovered that hostels with small budgets could rarely afford even essential maintenance tasks despite the fact that they were paid a per capita maintenance allowance by the State Government for that purpose. The overall need for regular maintenance was described earlier in this chapter under the heading of quality of accommodation offered.

More detailed information on the cost difficulties facing rural hostels is provided in Table 8.5. It shows food and building cost relativities between Brisbane and the relevant rural towns in which hostels are situated. The more isolated the hostel, the greater the cost differential. This must inevitably reduce its chance of survival unless offsetting financial assistance packages can be negotiated.

Table 8.5: Food and building cost relativities, Brisbane and hostel towns, 1977

Hostel town	*Food retail price index*[a]	*State building index*[b]
	(Brisbane = 100)	(Brisbane = 100)
QCWA		
Dalby	98	110
Gayndah	104	115
Emerald	110	130
Goondiwindi	104	115
Thargomindah	112	145
Shire Council		
Blackall	112	140
Georgetown	118	160
Cunnamulla	107	135
Winton	114	150
Longreach	112	145
Parents		
St. George	109	135
Bollon	107	135
Dirranbandi	106	135
Church		
Charleville	106	130
Herberton	109	135
Mt. Isa	113	150
Malanda	109	135
Normanton	119	170
Coen	119	170
Average	110	139

Source: [a] ABS, *Indexes of Retail Prices of Food in Queensland Towns*, 1977
[b] Department of Works, Brisbane

Income foregone

Like boarding schools, some hostels offered fee concessions when a number of students from the one family were boarding at the one institution at the same time. The largest portion of income foregone, however, came from bad debts from fees. Of the 17 hostels whose accounts were closely examined, eight reported losses from non payment of fees in 1976/77 and these bad debts ranged from $132 to $3 276. They totalled $10 154 and averaged out at almost $600 per hostel.

Capital Expenditure

Questions on capital expenditure encompassed the cost of acquiring a fixed asset and placing it in a suitable condition for use. Past examples would have included the establishment and furnishing of new hostels as occurred recently at Winton. Capital costs are usually met through accumulated surpluses from the recurrent account and through loan funds and State Government grants and subsidies. Not one hostel however reported any capital expenditure for 1976/77. This probably relates to the fact that 11 of the 17 hostels analysed reported recurrent deficits ranging from $320 to $19 812 and to their generally uncertain future. A new hostel was opened at Winton in June 1977 but no financial figures were made available. It is understood however that capital costs were in the vicinity of $500 000. A description of the state government assistance available to hostels is provided in the next few pages.

STUDENT HOSTEL INCOME

According to data obtained from the hostel questionnaire, the bulk of hostel income (85%) accrued from boarding fees. State per capita grants provided 10% and other grants, subsidies and donations 5%. The income framework is illustrated in Figure 8.4.

Figure 8.4: Source of hostel funds

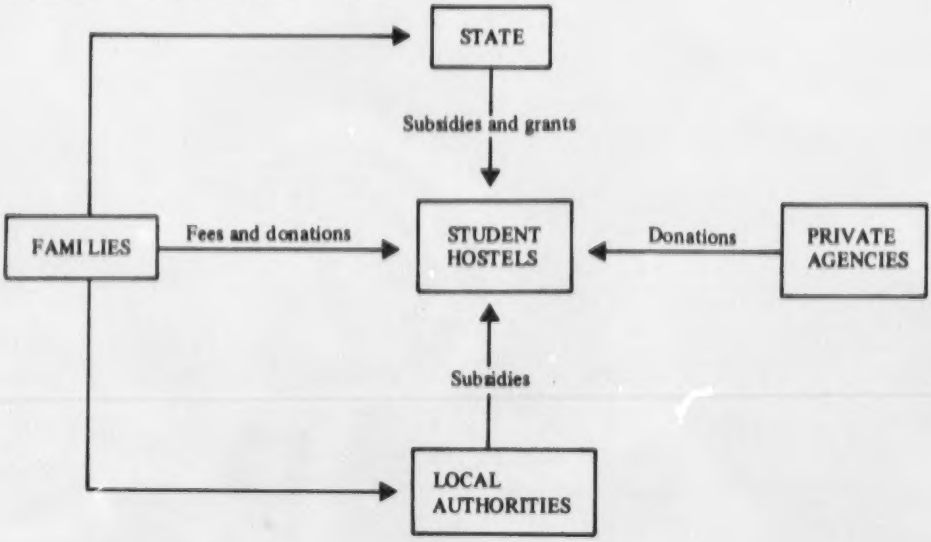


Table 8.6 details total and average recurrent income by the three categories described above. It will be seen that recurrent income totalled approximately $447 000 in 1976/77 — an average of around $26 300 per hostel. Comparison of total expenditure and total income indicated a deficit of $71 000.

Table 8.6: Sources of recurrent income, 1976/77

Source	*State total*	*Average per hostel*
	($)	($)
Boarding fees	381 980	22 469
State per capita grants	42 370	2 492
Other	22 657	1 333
	447 007	26 294

Boarding fees

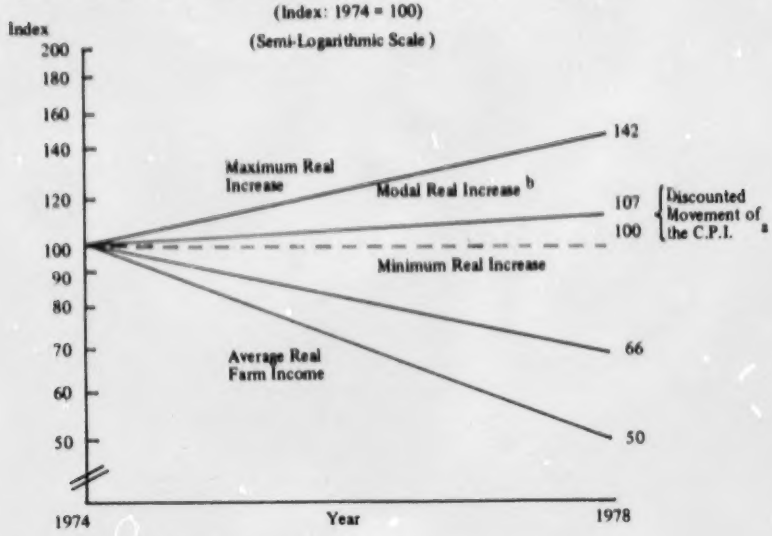
As indicated earlier, the hostel movement was established to provide relatively cheap accommodation to assist isolated children to attend school. Certainly in 1978, the average hostel fee ($1 000 per annum) was substantially less than the average boarding school fee ($2 000 per annum). It was also evident that there were wide inconsistencies in hostel fees both in the amounts charged during 1978 and in the variations made during the period 1974-78. For example, 1978 fees ranged from $650 ($15 per week) to $1 500 ($36 per week). It was difficult to see how the low fee could be economic, and despite parents' complaints, it was felt that this fee would have been more than offset by the range of available government allowances designed to assist LAFH students. On the other hand, the high cost fee seemed excessive since 11 catholic schools offered both board and tuition for less than the $1 500 demanded by the hostel. If normal supply and demand forces prevail, the inevitable prognosis for this hostel must surely be declining enrolments. Trends in hostel fees for the period 1974-78 are illustrated in Figures 8.5 and 8.6.

Figure 8.5 shows the real increase in hostel fees compared with movements in the consumer price index (CPI) for 1974-78, that is, all fee increases have been discounted by the movement in the CPI. As well as the modal increase, the maximum and minimum real fee increases are also shown. They ranged from +42% to −34%. By way of comparison, the graph also shows the decline in real farm income and illustrates why 8 of the 16* hostels assessed, chose to increase fees by less than the CPI. The other 8 hostels increased their fees by more than the CPI. The increase at one of these hostels was so great that it seemed excessive.

Several techniques were then attempted to try to isolate reasonable patterns of fee setting for student hostels. None really emerged and strangely there was not one hostel which had actually increased its fees in line with the CPI. Indeed one technique produced quite an alarming and sporadic fee setting puzzle. It is illustrated in Figure 8.6 and shows the rather haphazard policies of 6 hostels in different parts of the State. In 1974 they all charged the same fee of $14 per week. Four years later, substantial differences were evident, for the fees then ranged from $15 to $30 per week. Thus in only four years, a high-low differential of over 100% had been created in basically similar institutions. Moreover it can be seen that hostels run by the same type of organisation have made substantially different decisions. If nothing else, this example shows the extremely fragmented nature of the hostel industry and suggests, inter alia, that it might be beneficial for all concerned if a great deal more consultation occurred. Perhaps there is need for a state-wide hostel association or even a Country Hostels Authority along the lines of that operating in Western Australia.

* Data for 1974 were not available for one hostel.

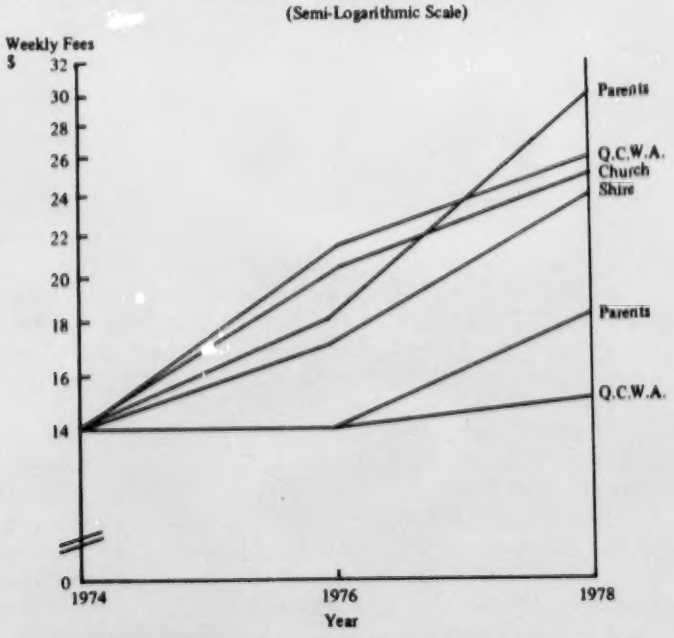
Figure 8.5: Real fee increases in all hostels, 1974-78



Note: [a] Actual increase in C.P.I. was 63.3%

[b] 7 Hostels showed increases between 102 and 110

Figure 8.6: Actual fee increases in six equivalent hostels, 1974-1978



Note: These hostels charged the same fee of approximately $14 per week in 1974.

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Government grants and subsidies

The state per capita grant cited above accounts for approximately 10% of all hostel income. In 1976/77 it was paid to the hostels at the rate of $100 per head and increased to $130 per head in 1978 after hostels had sought an increase in the level of payment. Officially no Commonwealth grants are paid to hostels although, as indicated, some hostels seem to have established a ploy where wages may be unofficially subsidised. Support by local government appears to vary from total responsibility for shire-owned hostels to complete avoidance in some other cases. Nevertheless in some cases QCWA hostels do seem to receive unofficial support.

The Queensland Government has in fact subsidised the operation of student hostels since 1945 when a dollar for dollar subsidy was first given to the QCWA for capital costs incurred in establishing a hostel. The subsidy also covered the purchase of essential furniture and equipment and was later extended to other approved organisations such as shire councils. In 1967 further financial assistance was accorded to QCWA hostels when the State Government approved the subsidisation of interest payments up to 6% per annum on loans raised to cover building costs incurred in providing new hostels or additional accommodation in existing hostels. The subsidy was increased to 7% in 1971 and extended to shire council hostels in 1976. By 1979 however, few organisations were concerned with establishing new hostels or extending existing ones, for falling enrolments and rising costs had combined to ensure that the main focus now fell on survival.

Other income

'Other income' data was poorly reported even though it provided about 5% of hostel income. It appeared to be derived from fund raising activities, donations from private organisations and so on. Seven hostels recorded no entry at all against this income category. This suggested either that they enjoyed little community support or that they did not report their fund raising activities for fear of affecting future levels of government assistance.

Notwithstanding, it is evident that the large overall *"operating"* deficit must be financed somehow or other. The hostels with the largest deficits were operated by shire councils so it can be assumed that these councils funded the deficits as necessary. Similarly church-run hostels were often saved embarassment by their sponsoring bodies. It is also understood that in some situations shire councils may also assist QCWA hostels in financial distress. Such assistance is usually of an indirect nature. Generally however QCWA hostels are left to fend for themselves and this is one reason why their numbers continue to decline.

SUMMARY

In total the 17 hostels analysed above had a combined operating deficit of $71 000 — an average of around $4 000 each. Individual losses ranged form $320 to $19 812. Only 5 hostels concluded the 1976/77 financial year with a surplus and these ranged from $18 to $1 520. If the viability index used for boarding schools were applied to the 5 *'surplus'* hostels, not one could be considered viable. In other words, on the basis of 1976/77 data, no hostel was financially sound enough to be considered a *'viable proposition.'*

Some problems of hostels could be attributed to demographic trends and increased government provision of educational facilities in rural areas, but others are faults in the hostel system itself, particularly in relation to staffing, administration and finances. Parents made it clear, for example, that they would not support hostels where the pastoral care was known to be poor. In such cases, enrolments usually fell off significantly, affected hostel income and made it difficult, if not impossible, for the management committee to improve the quality of supervision available.

Finally, an examination of the trend in fees charged, suggested that some hostels take little account of the range of government assistance available to parents. Most hostel boarders, for example, would have received both the Remote Area Allowance and the Isolated Children's Allowance which together would have given them a minimum level of assistance of $800 in 1977. Some may also have received additional Commonwealth allowances which are made available for those suffering financial hardship.* Notwithstanding, two Q.C.W.A. hostels charged their secondary students only $588 and $630 respectively. The first hostel has since closed because of financial problems; the second remarkably enough has been charging the same fee for the past 3 years (1977-1979) because of parental opposition to increases.

It appeared that many hostel management committees were aware of their problems but were of the opinion that they could not overcome them without government assistance. They suggested:

(a) indexation of the $130 per capita maintenance grant to take account of higher capital works costs in the more remote areas of Queensland;
(b) subsidisation of operating losses;
(c) increased allowances for families attending hostels;
(d) boarding allowances should be paid direct to the boarding institution rather than to the parents;
(e) additional assistance to Shire Councils for capital works programs; and
(f) the provision of a 50% subsidy for hostel maintenance programs.

While most of these are well considered propositions, many are proposed solutions to the particularly difficult circumstances which prevail in some hostels.

* See Appendix I for details.

Chapter IX

CONCLUSION

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study has examined many of the problems which confront isolated families in the State of Queensland who must find suitable ways of educating their children. Unlike families who reside in urban areas, isolated families are not always able to arrange for their children to attend a suitable school on a daily attendance basis. Broadly speaking the educational alternatives they may choose are either to keep children at home and educate them with the aid of correspondence lessons, or to provide them with daily classes by having them live away from home.

The overall approach to the study has been to concentrate on the market forces which match the demand for living away from home facilities with their supply. Thus emphasis throughout the study has been on quantifying the number of children who LAFH or may potentially require LAFH facilities, and on determining the quantity and quality of away from home accommodation that is available. Of necessity, the study has also had to examine other economic variables such as family preferences for various educational arrangements, the choices they make, the costs incurred, the nature and level of government subsidies, enrolments at boarding schools and hostels, and the financial operations of these institutions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

In general, the most significant outcome of the study is that the supply of facilities exceeds demand and that, on both sides of the market, several problems are apparent. This is scarcely surprising since problems in connexion with LAFH arrangements had been made known to the Queensland Department of Education prior to the commencement of this study. Moreover the investigation of isolated children in 1976 by the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts alluded to these problems and recommended a study such as this to provide a better understanding of the situation.

To consider the findings in more detail they have been summarised under two main headings viz. the demand for and supply of LAFH facilities. The former covers the present and future demand for LAFH facilities and includes a resume of the need for such facilities, data about family isolation, and information in connection with family preferences for the different types of LAFH facilities. The latter covers the trend in enrolments at boarding schools and hostels, their economic position and the quality of their accommodation facilities.

Demand for LAFH Facilities

The study showed that demographically Queensland's population was far more decentralised than the other States and because of the extreme sparsity of population in some areas, Queensland had to provide, relative to the other States, a higher proportion of schools in rural areas. Because provision is directly related to the pattern of settlement, families living

in many rural areas found it difficult to obtain ready access to schools. Four specific settlement patterns in rural areas were identified, but in general families in any one of the categories would probably find that their children had to leave home to attend school at some time or other. Moreover population trends in recent years had increased the uncertainty of school provision in these rural areas which in turn increased family dependence on LAFH facilities.

It was found that there was in fact a direct relationship between the spread of school facilities and the need for children to live away from home. Only relatively few children in the State, for example, do not have daily access to a primary school but considerably more are without access at the secondary level. While over 50% of families who responded to a questionnaire used in this study were within 33 kms of a primary school, the proportion fell to 22% for junior secondary and 7% for senior secondary. Clearly, distance from a suitable school is a prime factor which creates a demand for living away from home facilities, but poor roads and the impact of adverse weather conditions were also found to contribute significantly to isolation problems.

Fortunately only a small proportion of the State's 443 000 students can be considered isolated in this regard but for the 4 400 involved, the pursuit of schooling creates serious problems. To assess their circumstances, and to determine how they arrange for the education of their children the parents were asked to answer a questionnaire Of these 1 938 responded. They had nearly 4 400 children of school age of whom 57% were reported as living away from home, 24% were at home and able to attend school daily, and 19% were on correspondence lessons at home. Most of the children at home were of primary school age. This seemed to emphasize both the satisfactory nature of primary school provision and parental preference to keep their younger children at home for as long as possible. Conversely most of those living away were secondary students. Relevant factors included dissatisfaction with the secondary correspondence system, unacceptably long bus routes and the fact that facilities at some secondary schools were found wanting compared with their urban counterparts.

The increasing difficulty of maintaining access to schools as children grow older is best illustrated by an analysis which showed that while 82% of the children below year 6 from the isolated families who responded to the questionnaire were able to stay at home, the number dropped significantly to 2% for students in years 11 and 12.

Most isolated children therefore experience education in at least two quite different arrangements during their school years, with the most common sequence being correspondence or daily school attendance at the primary levels followed by a boarding school for secondary education. Some however might utilise a student hostel for years 8-10 and then move to boarding school for years 11-12. As most families had 2-3 children, a combination of arrangements could be in use at any one time, depending on the stage of maturation of the family.

The fact that so many isolated children live away from home at the secondary level and the belief by isolated parents that separation from the family for educational reasons is justified, indicated that these families had a strong commitment to education. This commitment was also reinforced by responses to questions relating to educational aspirations. Parents indicated that they wanted 70% of their children to complete year 12 at least and more than half the parents thought that their children would have to move to a city to secure future employment. Many parents clearly believed it was in their children's best interests to board away in large towns to receive a quality education, become familiar with city life and eventually be able to compete in the city job market on more even terms.

Consistent with these aspirations most parents looked for a quality education for their children and in so doing, the majority chose boarding schools. The Department's records for 1977 indicated that of those children receiving LAFH allowances, 64% were at boarding school, 16% in private board, 13% in second homes and 7% in student hostels.

Boarding schools were popular because parents believed they had high educational standards, suitable pastoral care arrangements and programs of extra curricular activities. Parents also felt that boarding schools provided a broader curriculum, better discipline and more experienced and dedicated teachers than their closest state secondary school. Boarding schools were also regarded as a means of completing the personal, cultural and religious development of their children. Tradition also appeared to be an element of choice, for in some families, a boarding school education has been accepted practice for generations. Some were also attracted to boarding schools through friends or through advertisements in the press.

Student hostels also have a long history in Queensland, but their popularity is waning. Their main attractions have been their relatively low cost accommodation and their proximity to home. Although investigations revealed many well-run hostels with good management and suitable staff, parents were generally critical of the quality of supervision provided. The ICPA tended to support the retention of hostels only where facilities were adequate and a need was demonstrated.

Quite apart from the aspirations and convictions which families had about the education of their children, they also realized that sending children to boarding school is costly. Consequently the financial considerations of such a choice had to be examined. It seemed that family wealth, family income, government assistance and a range of direct and hidden costs would probably be the final determinants of whether a child was sent to boarding school. Unfortunately such data were hard to obtain and even when available, proved difficult to interpret. Analysis of the available data suggested however that the financial factors influencing LAFH decisions were more closely centred around the balance between costs and allowances than on family wealth and income. By way of example, some government allowances are means-tested and this allows low-income families to receive greater assistance. Consequently it would not be surprising to find that these allowances are influential in moulding decisions to send children away from home to attend school.

In essence the majority of families who responded to the questionnaire can be described as stable, two parent families with 2-3 children who own and depend on rural properties for their livelihood. Most received relatively low incomes in 1977 due to an extended rural recession and would almost certainly have experienced difficulties supporting children living away from home. Understandably perhaps, more than half the respondents indicated dissatisfaction with the government assistance schemes. It was noted that rural incomes have been subject to large annual fluctuations but that improvements in average farm incomes were registered in 1978-79. Despite this recovery, boarding schools have shown only marginal increases in their boarding enrolments. This suggests that the demand for LAFH facilities for isolated children will not increase much beyond present levels and all else being equal, might peak at around 4 500 isolated students for all LAFH arrangements.

Supply of LAFH Facilities

Historically it is quite evident that non-state boarding schools played an important role in the development of secondary education in Queensland particularly in respect of the access to education by isolated families. The traditional interdependence between the two sectors began to weaken in the late 1960's when the State Government expanded its

educational role in rural areas in response to local demand for schools in particular areas. Access to these schools was facilitated by the establishment of free school bus services. The provision of new rural secondary schools slowed considerably in the 1970's with many of the new schools being associated with new mining developments and a new approach to aboriginal education. This would seem to suggest that the demand for secondary education in rural areas had tended to stabilise during the 1970's.

It was a little surprising therefore to note that in the period 1970-78 boarding enrolments in Queensland's non-state boarding schools had slumped 16% from 9 404 to 7 885. There was an interim peak of 9 515 in 1974 which seemed to coincide with a rural recovery but this proved short-lived. Research indicated some interesting causal factors for the decline. They included the rural recession and an associated population drift away from the rural areas, the fact that isolated students were only a minority (35% to 40%) of the total boarding school component, the loss of boarders from Papua New Guinea following Independence and the suggestion that boarding schools were no longer meeting the needs of some of their potential clients. Tentative figures indicated that the decline in boarding school enrolments continued on into 1979 with some schools showing small marginal recoveries at the beginning of 1980. Even so, in 1979 it was estimated that there were some 1 700 vacant beds in boarding schools.

Student hostel enrolments were only available for the period 1974-78 but an equally severe downward trend was evident. Enrolments fell by almost 22% from 528 to 413 compared with 17% for boarding schools for the same period. Unlike boarding schools however it is likely that hostel enrolments are composed almost totally of rural children. Hence in the case of hostels, boarding enrolments may be taken as a true indicator of need for such institutions over time. Tentative figures indicated that the downward trend in hostel enrolments was continuing and that in 1979 there were nearly 200 vacant beds in student hostels.

In such circumstances it seems reasonable to assume that the supply of LAFH facilities would contract in proportion to the demand for such facilities, but this economic phenomenon was not observed in many cases. Although seven large catholic schools closed their boarding wings in the period under review (1970-78) and the QCWA closed 13 of their hostels in the last 15 years, all the independent boarding schools seem to have continued operation. A few of the latter have amalgamated to some extent, or have become co-educational. Nevertheless, reaction to the surplus boarding capacity in schools has not led to a consolidation of places supplied as might be expected, but rather to increased competition between institutions of the same type for the reduced pool of boarders. Naturally individual schools and hostels have experienced different outcomes but in general, the majority seem to be in severe difficulty.

According to the data analysed and visits to the institutions concerned, boarding schools and hostels have two major problems in addition to uneconomic boarding levels. These encompass financial difficulties and severe staffing problems in the boarding component.

Some of the financial difficulties stem from the level of fees payable, and this in turn is associated with the excess of places available. For the most part, student fees have provided the principal source of income for boarding schools (around 65%) and hostels (around 85%) and neither of these boarding institutions have improved their financial position through significant fee increases. At a time of excess capacity, some schools and hostels no doubt fear further enrolment losses if fees are increased by more than a small margin. Moreover in recognition of the rural recession and the continuing financial difficulty of some families on

the land, fee increases have been related to parents' ability to pay. Even so bad debts are significant in this context for some schools.

On average, boarding schools increased their fees by nearly 69% in the period 1974-78 but after taking into account the effects of inflation as denoted by the CPI, the *'real'* increase in fees amounted to less than 4%. Parental complaints about significant increases in fees appear to be largely based upon a money illusion rather than actual costs. Notwithstanding, parental opposition to fee increases seems to have had a damaging impact on hostels, for when the fees were deflated to account for movements in the CPI, the *'real'* fees charged between 1974-78 actually declined by around 25%.

Government grants and subsidies accounted for most of the balance in recurrent income and it is clear that most boarding schools would be unable to survive without them. Of course, amongst isolated parents a considerable part of the fee payment is also subsidised through the State and Commonwealth allowance schemes.

Data concerning expenditure and income over time were not available and analysis of this aspect of financial difficulties had to be limited to data provided in respect of 1976. At that time, 32 of the 47 schools studied reported large deficits either overall or in their boarding house activities. Twenty of the schools offset these deficits through increased day school charges. It is understood that the financial position in most schools has worsened since then.

It should be noted that the above figures relate solely to recurrent charges and take no account of the necessity to cover capital costs and future contingencies. If a margin of 10% were allowed for this purpose, then on the basis of the 1976 figures, only half the schools could be considered viable propositions. If the same formula were used on hostels, not one of the 20 hostels surveyed could be considered viable. Yet for the purposes indicated, this margin of 10% would have to be regarded as a bare minimum. Examined from this perspective it is difficult not to come to the conclusion that many boarding schools and virtually all hostels are financially stretched beyond their means. This is being cushioned by a long term run down in physical facilities which must inevitably lead to their detriment.

Acquisition of staff to supervise boarders and operate the boarding facilities were also perceived to be a major problem in both schools and hostels. On the one hand, there appeared to be decreased interest by the general public in the style of community living demanded by schools and hostels. In particular the small number of people who were interested in this type of work were often deterred by what they perceived as poor live-in facilities and overly demanding work schedules. On the other hand, the increasing cost burden imposed indirectly by industrial awards was crippling the ability of institutions to pay attractive wages and recruit suitable people. An associated problem was the decreasing number of religious and the increasing need to employ suitable lay staff in their stead.

Finally the report noted that as a result of the critical financial situation in which LAFH institutions found themselves, the quality of their living facilities had in many cases been eroded at the very time when the quality of life in Australia had improved significantly in most other spheres. Dissatisfaction which was reported during the study centred around the quality of the boarding facilities, the meals, excessive regimentation and the desire for smaller accommodation cubicles in preference to the many large institutionalised dormitories on offer. In some cases the need to maintain and upgrade buildings and equipment was critical but the schools had no reserve funds for the purpose. A limited amount of government assistance was made available for this purpose in 1977 and the Schools Commission subsequently allocated the funds to schools with severe problems and

whose major concern lay with country boarders. Some improvements have since been effected but much more needs to be done.

A FINAL APPRAISAL

The implications of the findings of this study inevitably lead to a fairly gloomy prognosis about the future of LAFH arrangements for the education of isolated children in Queensland. In the first place it is clearly evident from the wide-ranging analyses undertaken for this study that present arrangements are far from satisfactory. In many cases children who live away from home must endure, not only the problems of separation from their families, but also the physical discomfort of poor quality facilities and the emotional upheavals of living regimented lives. Urgent needs in this regard seem to be improvements in the living standard of children LAFH and better standards of pastoral care. At present however, there are no signs of significant changes in either of these two facets of LAFH.

A second important implication stems from the structural demographic changes in rural areas of the State which has contributed to the present underutilisation of boarding facilities. Once again however, the prospects for any change are poor. There is little indication of a rural revival which will increase the number of families dependent on LAFH facilities. Any growth in population of rural areas will most likely be associated with the mining industry and towns dependent on this activity can usually support their own schools. What now seems certain is that more LAFH institutions will need to close or they will continue to operate with very limited numbers of boarders and will be fairly uneconomic. Unfortunately the impact of the market may force the closure of some facilities, which, for geographic and other reasons, would be best retained. Consequently a program of modification seems required to ensure that an orderly and satisfactory contraction of facilities occurs. Moreover, intervention may be necessary to ensure that a market over-reaction does not occur. The present financial difficulties of some institutions could lead to a spate of closures and a consequent shortage of accommodation.

Thirdly, no improvements in LAFH arrangements will be possible without additional resources and a careful appraisal of financial arrangements. As well as the capital improvements already suggested many operators of LAFH facilities will need to adopt measures that ensure that they operate efficiently. Because both education and accommodation are labour intensive activities LAFH institutions will have to reconsider their positions in connexion with fee increases. Increases in salaries, together with the need to employ staff rather than depend on voluntary services means that significant fee increases will be necessary to ensure that incomes cover not only immediate short term costs, but the full costs of accommodating children in facilities which are acceptable by modern standards.

Parents too, should reconsider their position in connection with both fees and their requirements. Parents associations should appreciate that the more diverse their selection of facilities, the more expensive they are likely to be. Thus a concentration of LAFH at the secondary level is more likely to result in the provision of a good standard of facilities at reasonable fee levels. Moreover as LAFH is heavily subsidised, both governments will need to re-examine these payments, particularly in connexion with equity requirements.

Clearly there will be a continuing need to service the educational requirements of families who live in isolated areas of Queensland, and LAFH facilities have an on-going vital role to play. Consequently efforts should be made to rectify current problems. This will mean a concerted and co-ordinated effort from both sides of the market. Although it may be easy to claim that an injection of funds could solve many of the problems, the outcomes from this

study show that such a simple solution would be unsatisfactory. Existing long-term structural deficiencies call for a more comprehensive approach.

Implicit in the need for resolution is the likely fact that if the depreciation of boarding facilities is allowed to continue, then parents will ultimately reach the point where they will seek an alternative source of schooling close to home. The responsibility for such provision would probably lie with the State government and because of the great distances involved and the size of the facilities required, such an alternative would be a very expensive one indeed.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS (ABS) STATISTICAL DIVISIONS OF QUEENSLAND

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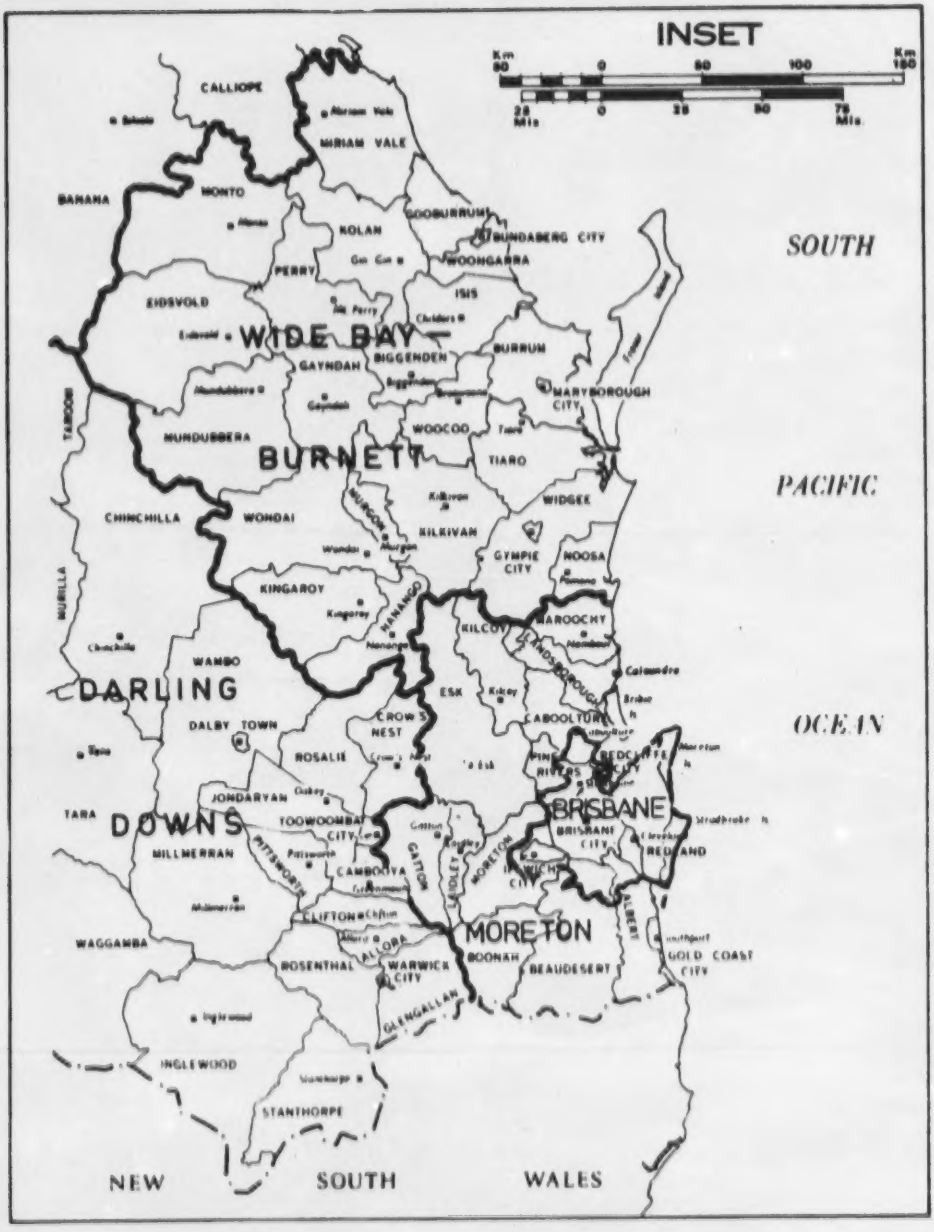

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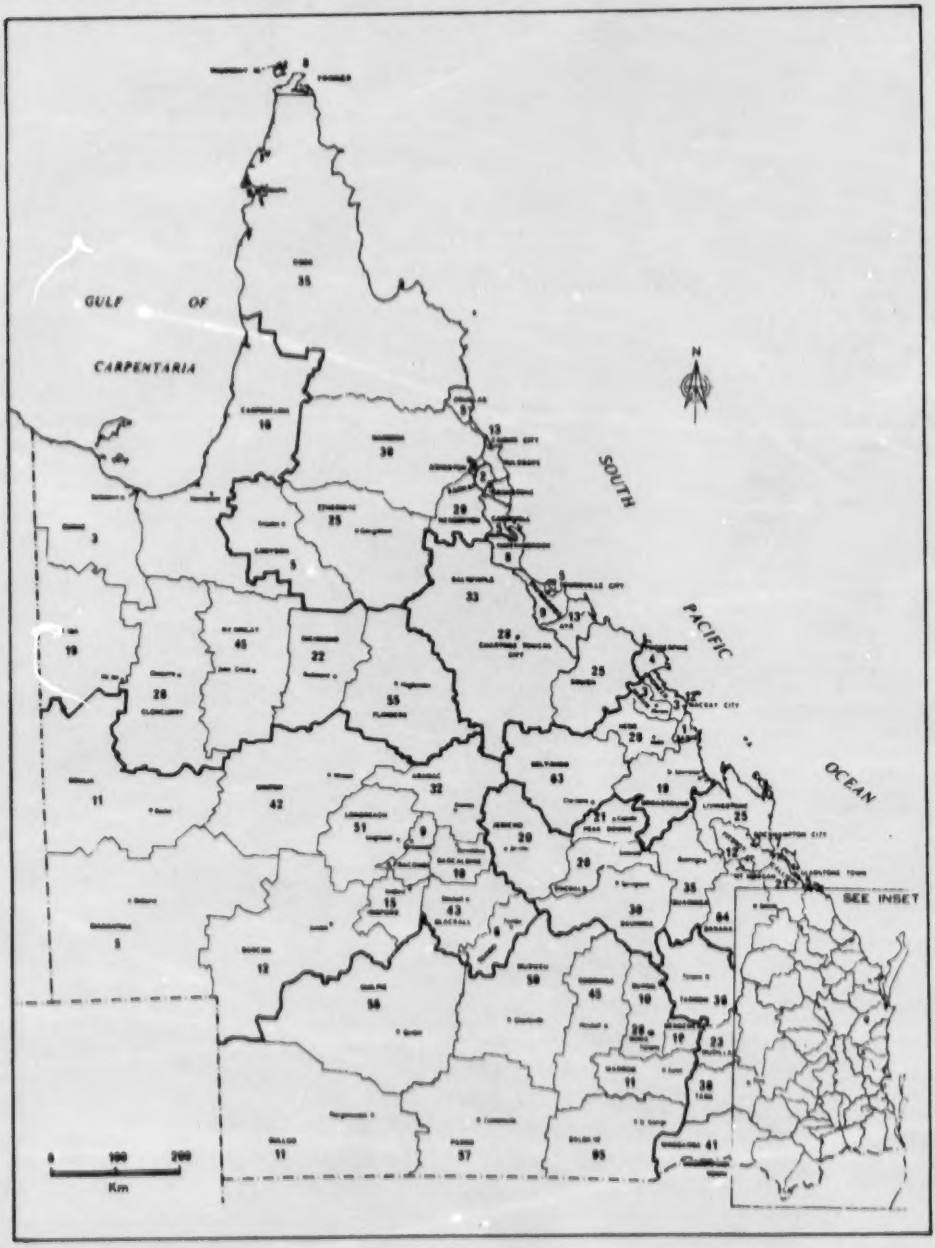
STATE & COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT LIVING AWAY FROM HOME ALLOWANCES, 1978

Type of Allowance	*Value Per Student Per Annum*	*Eligibility*	
		Year	*Conditions*
STATE			
1. Student Allowance	$ 222	8-12	Means test (income limits differ with number of dependent children and home district).
2. Remote Area Allowance	$ 290 $ 360 $ 450	6- 7 8-10 11-12	No means test: > 4.8 km from school or transport; > 32 km or 1 hr on transport service.
3. Special School Remote Area Allowance	$ 290 $ 360	to 12 years from 13 years	No means test. Authorized by Staff Inspector, Guidance and Special Education.
4. Senior Remote Area Scholarship	up to $1 000	11-12	Means test; eligible for RAA; attendance at an approved boarding school; minimum of 24 points in six Board approved subjects for the Junior Certificate.
COMMONWEALTH			
1. Boarding			
(a) Basic	$ 500	1-12	No means test; geographically isolated i.e. home at least 16 km from school and 4.5 km from school transport or at least 56 km (1½ hrs travel) from school; special consideration if (a) home < 16 km but no public transport is available or (b) there is regular disruption to school travel by impassable roads.
(b) Additional	$ 500	1-12	As above but subject to means test and to boarding costs actually incurred.
(c) Supplementary	$ 550 $ 450 $ 300	11-12 8-10 1- 7	As above; payable where there is particular financial hardship.
2. Short term Boarding	$ 15 per week		Payable if students live away as a temporary measure.
3. Correspondence			
(a) Basic	$ 200	1-12	No means test; enrolment in correspondence schools.
(b) Additional	up to $ 300	1-12	No means test; evidence of amounts spent.
4. Second Home		1-12	
(a) Basic	$ 500 $ 925 $1 275	(1 child) (2 children) (3 or more children	No means test; no reasonable daily access to a government school for at least one child.
(b) Additional	—		Means test; evidence of amounts spent.

Note:
Full details of all government financial assistance for isolated students are available on application to the Queensland Department of Education.

PARENT RESPONSES FOR EACH OF THE STATE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS



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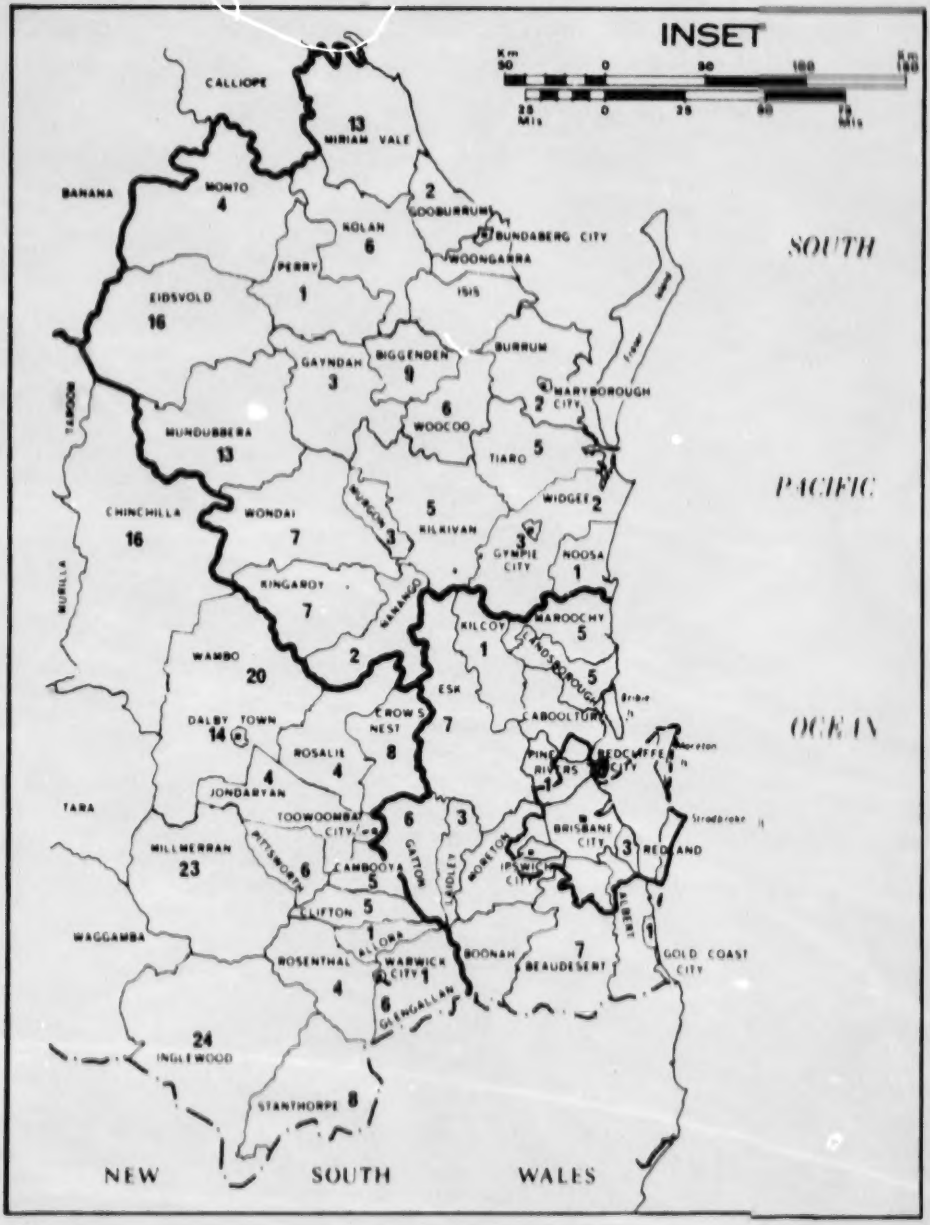

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Table 1: FREQUENCY OF VISITS OF FAMILIES TO BUSINESS CENTRES BY DISTANCE FROM RESIDENCE TO THESE CENTRES **Appendix 4**

Distance in Kilometres	*Frequency of Visits*[a]									
	Several Weekly		*Weekly*		*Fortnightly*		*Monthly*		*Less than Monthly*	
	No.	(%)[b]	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
≤ 5	102	48	5	2	2	1				
5- 50	68	32	208	58	109	27	37	8	12	3
51-100	31	15	108	30	210	52	133	31	65	14
101-200	8	4	32	9	78	19	198	46	167	38
>200	3	1	4	1	8	2	65	15	199	45
	212		357		407		433		443	

[a] Data was incomplete for 86 respondents
[b] All percentages have been rounded

Table 2: THE VIEWS OF FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN LIVING AWAY ABOUT ADEQUACY OF ALLOWANCES FOR FAMILIES IN DIFFERENT INCOME CATEGORIES

Income ($)	*No Answer*		*Adequate*		*Inadequate*		*Total*[a] *Number*
	Number	(%)	*Number*	(%)	*Number*	(%)	
<$3 000	37	10	146	40	180	50	363
$ 3 001-$ 6 000	40	14	109	39	131	47	280
$ 6 001-$10 000	53	16	122	37	154	47	329
$10 001-$15 000	35	13	79	30	150	57	264
$15 001-$20 000	13	12	40	37	54	51	107
>$20 000	9	11	26	32	46	57	81

[a] Income data was not available for 125 respondents.

Table 3: EDUCATION ARRANGEMENT AND STUDENT YEAR LEVEL AND SEX[a]

Student Year Level	*LAFH Arrangements*								*AH Arrangements*			
	Boarding School		*Hostel*		*Private Board*		*Second Home*		*Correspondence*		*At Home School Daily*	
	M	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*	*M*	*F*
1	6		1	3	4	6	6	5	70	65	37	50
2	7	3	4	10	6	3	11	6	70	65	39	40
3	3	4	8	4	4	2	14	7	63	60	66	42
4	8	9	3	8	8	2	10	7	66	51	50	63
5	10	9	11	5	6	6	8	10	52	48	81	60
6	28	14	2	11	8	6	18	13	25	36	68	72
7	28	26	7	9	10	8	9	13	22	38	77	77
8	135	128	15	12	19	23	14	15	19	12	36	23
9	165	143	16	10	23	24	9	17	11	14	32	37
10	154	124	19	6	20	22	16	12	9	10	36	35
11	169	176	7	12	13	32	5	3	2	4	2	1
12	148	140	3	12	14	25	2	12	1	2		1
	861	776	96	102	135	161	122	120	410	405	524	501
	1 637		198		296		242		815		1 025	

[a] There were 168 cases of invalid data.

Table 4:

YEAR LEVEL AND SEX OF STUDENTS LIVING AWAY FROM HOME [a]

Education Level	*Year Level*	*Sex*	
		Male	*Female*
Primary	1	17	14
	2	28	24
	3	29	17
	4	29	26
	5	35	30
	6	56	44
	7	54	56
Junior Secondary	8	183	178
	9	213	194
	10	209	164
Senior Secondary	11	194	223
	12	167	189
Total		1 214	1 159

[a] Data was incomplete in 80 cases.

Table 5:

FAMILY ATTITUDES REGARDING CHILDREN LIVING AWAY FROM HOME

Statements Regarding Children LAFH	*Family Attitudes*		
	Disagree	*Uncertain*	*Agree*
	(%)	(%)	(%)
1. Justification of sending children away to obtain a good education	28	8	64
2. Prefer children live away compared with driving children long distances	14	8	78
3. Prefer accommodation facilities close to home so children could return home frequently	22	10	68

Table 6:

FREQUENCY OF HOME VISITS MADE BY STUDENTS LIVING AWAY FROM HOME

Frequency of Home Visits	*No. of Students* [a]	*Percentage* [b] *(%)*
Weekly	431	19
Monthly	278	12
Once a term	1 522	68
Once a year	6	0.3
	2 237	

[a] Frequency of visits was not stated for 216 students
[b] Percentages have been rounded.

PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR EACH OF THEIR CHILDREN

Table 7: **Educational Aspirations for Students Living Away and for Students at Home**

Educational Aspiration	*LAFH Students*[a]	*AH Students*[a]
	(%)	(%)
Tertiary	34	29
Complete Year 12	37	39
Year 11-12	7	8
Complete Year 10	11	14
Trade /Rural Training	10	11

[a] Percentages have been rounded

Table 8: **Educational Aspirations for Sons and Daughters**

Educational Aspirations	*LAFH Students*[a]		*AH Students*[a]	
	Sons	*Daughters*	*Sons*	*Daughters*
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Tertiary	30	38	27	30
Complete 12	33	42	34	44
Grades 11-12	7	7	6	9
Complete 10	13	9	15	12
Trade /Rural Training	17	4	17	4

[a] Percentages have been rounded

Table 9: **FAMILY ATTITUDES COMPARING VARIOUS LAFH FACILITIES**

Statements Regarding LAFH Facilities	*Family Attitudes*		
	Disagree	*Uncertain*	*Agree*
	(%)	(%)	(%)
Private board is better than hostels	26	28	46
Private board is better than boarding schools	72	15	13
Hostels are preferable to boarding schools	79	14	7

Table 10: **PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN BOARDING SCHOOLS AND OTHER LAFH ARRANGEMENTS**

Educational Aspiration	*Students in Boarding Schools*	*Students in Other Arrangements*
	(%)	(%)
Tertiary	38	25
Complete 12	36	40
Grades 11-12	8	6
Complete 10	8	18
Trade /Rural Training	10	11

PARENTS' COMMENTS REGARDING THEIR CHOICE OF LIVING AWAY FROM HOME ARRANGEMENTS

Boarding Schools

(i) Boarding schools have a higher educational standard than the public state schools.
(ii) Boarding school teachers are more dedicated (than local school teachers).
(iii) There is a wider range of courses, interests and opportunities at boarding schools.
(iv) Boarding schools offer a choice of subjects as well as religious training.
(v) Children brought up in the bush should be given some of the advantages of living in the city. At boarding school they learn to mix with people from all walks of life.
(vi) Independent boarding schools give our children opportunities not available in any other way.
(vii) They provide much better supervision than hostels.
(viii) Prefer to know where children are after school, so chose boarding school instead of hostels or private board.
(ix) Boarding schools are the best alternative to home life.
(x) Driving children to high school would require me to travel 100 miles daily. This is impossible because of my own work. A child should also be involved in sporting and other outside activities and boarding school seems to be the only way.
(xi) We believe life in a good boarding school broadens the aspect of the child. My husband and I both attended boarding schools and feel we benefited from it.
(xii) Religious teaching by Nuns is essential.
(xiii) A good boarding school is the answer to many problems associated with living in remote areas. It can provide competition, companionship, religion, sport.
(xiv) Boarding school gives children of 16 to 17 years time to adjust to living away from home while still in a protected environment.

Private Board

(i) Our child boards privately because it is cheaper than boarding school.
(ii) We cannot afford anything else (but private board).
(iii) Prefer child to board with grandmother because of better care and food (than boarding schools).
(iv) We choose private board because our daughter can come home at weekends.
(v) Private board would be my first choice as this would have a family atmosphere, not the cold hard feeling of a hostel.
(vi) We board our second child privately because we cannot afford to have two children at boarding school.

Second Home

(i) We ran a second home for 12 years to enable our 4 children to be educated and estimated it cost us $40 000. Second home allowances have only been available the last two years.
(ii) Our second home is substandard and is furnished with essentials only. We could not afford hostel or boarding fees. We like to travel home as often as possible.
(iii) It is cheaper to live in town (in a second home) for which you receive help, than to travel 80 miles a day.

(iv) Adopted a second home situation because we feel the children need a family environment. Rent and school costs totalled $5 674 (less allowances $2 275) were a great strain on our resources.

(v) I feel they are better looked after. I live in a caravan to send my children to school and we all go home to help on the property at the weekend. This is the only help my husband has as we cannot afford to employ anyone.

(vi) Primary children should not be sent away and the second home is the best solution.

(vii) We figured it (a second home) would be cheaper in the long run with 5 children to educate.

(viii) Have a second home because I couldn't manage to teach correspondence lessons myself.

(ix) We have chosen a second home as a compromise between boarding school and keeping them home.

(x) The children were kept together and (were able to) mix with other children.

(xi) We maintain that schooling to the highest possible level of education is essential but it is also essential to keep the family unit together.

(xii) Chose a second home because 1st and 3rd children did not get a good supervised education at a private boarding school.

(xiii) The second home meant a second income to finance it and the family divided with a lot of travelling between (but) it is far better for the children than being isolated by correspondence.

(xiv) A disadvantage of a second home is the hardship of a separated family.

Student Hostels

(i) Hostels are very adequate in the 8-12 years age group.

(ii) Hostels do a wonderful job and provide a necessary service.

(iii) Our children are at the hostel because they can come home often.

(iv) At boarding school we would not be able to see them as much as we like so we chose a hostel close to us.

(v) Hostels in towns are good for young children if supervision is adequate.

(vi) Parents would use hostels if they maintain a high standard of supervision and adequate facilities.

Appendix 6

CORRELATION BETWEEN TOTAL BOARDING ENROLMENTS AND AVERAGE REAL FARM INCOME, 1970-78

	1970	*1972*	*1974*	*1976*	*1978*	*Correlation*
Total Queensland Boarding Enrolments	9 404	9 254	9 515	8 110	7 885	$r = 0.4289$
Average Real Farm Income (Australia)[a]	$5 345	$5 334	$11 809	$5 619	$5 841	

[a] Based on figures provided by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Canberra; 1970 = 100.

Appendix 7

PAGE FROM SCHOOLS COMMISSION QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TO SCHOOLS IN 1977

1976 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Recurrent Funds

5 Income – for recurrent purposes

Office use 12

	Office use	Tuition $	Boarding $
A. Income from private sources			
(i) Net school fees	01		
(ii) Other net receipts from students	02		
(iii) Church or parish grants	03		
(iv) Other income	04		
B. State Government grants			
(i) Per capita grants	05		
(ii) Interest subsidies	06		
(iii) Other State recurrent grants (specify)	07		
C. Commonwealth Government grants			
(i) General recurrent grants	08		
(ii) Disadvantaged school recurrent grants	09		
(iii) Child migrant grants	10		
(iv) Other Commonwealth recurrent grants (specify)	11		
D. Total recurrent income	12		

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A COMPARISON OF KEY FACTORS BETWEEN SCHOOLS IN THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST QUARTILE OF VIABILITY, 1976, BY AVERAGE RECORD OF EACH QUARTILE

	No. of Schools	*Locality*	*System*	*Sex*	*Average per Quartile*							
					Viability Index	*1976 Fees*	*Real Fee Increase 1974-76*	*Total Enrol-ments*	*No. of Boarders*	*Boarders as a % of Total Enrol.*	*Occupancy Rate*	*Capital Expenditure ($'000)*
Highest Quartile	12	0 Prov [a] 3 BM [b]	9 Cath [c] 3 Independ [d]	3 Co-ed, 4G, 5B	112	$1 383	13.3%	384	195	58%	93%	433
Lowest Quartile	12	8 Prov 4 BM	9 Independ 3 Cath	4 Co-ed, 6G, 2B	84	$1 824	11.3%	330	167	52%	70%	465

[a] Provincial
[b] Brisbane-Metropolitan
[c] Catholic
[d] Independent

Notes:

(i) Per school basis not a per student basis
(ii) Actual boarding numbers expressed as a percentage of total boarding capacity available.

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SURVEY OF STUDENT BOARDING FACILITIES IN QUEENSLAND

PARENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. *Please answer as many questions as you can.*
2. *Where a choice of answers is available, please tick (✓) the appropriate square.*
3. *Please print answers in BLOCK CAPITALS to ensure legibility and assist in interpretation.*
4. *No names are required to be entered on this questionnaire.*

PLANNING BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION QUEENSLAND
NOVEMBER 1977

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AREA CODE	(1)

SECTION A: DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENT

(1) **Name of Shire in which you live**

(2) **Length of time in this District**

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

1. ☐ Less than 1 year
2. ☐ 1–5 years
3. ☐ 6–10 years
4. ☐ more than 10 years

(3) **Present family situation (✓)**

1. ☐ Two parent family
2. ☐ One parent family
3. ☐ Other e.g. guardian, relative

(4) **Number of dependent children in each of the following categories**

☐ Less than 6 years

☐ 6–15 years

☐ over 15 years and still a full-time student

SECTION B: OCCUPATIONAL DETAILS

If there is only *one* parent (or guardian) in the family, some questions in this section need not be answered.

(5) **Trade, profession or occupation of father (or male guardian)**
e.g. Farmer, Labourer, Miner, Tradesman, Technician, Shopkeeper etc.

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	(5)

Briefly indicate type of farmer, technician, etc., e.g. wheat farmer, radio technician and so on.

_____

(6) **Occupational Status**
(✓ most appropriate box)
Where people have more than one job, it may be appropriate to tick more than one box

1. ☐ Business or Property Owner
2. ☐ Business or Property Manager
3. ☐ Employee
4. ☐ Presently unemployed

(7) **If mother (or female guardian) earns an income, indicate the occupation involved**

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	(7)

Is mother's occupation full-time or part-time? (✓)

Full-time 1. ☐ Part-time 2. ☐

(8) **Please indicate total combined taxable income for both parents in 1976–77 (✓)**

1. ☐ Less than $3,000
2. ☐ $3,000–$6,000
3. ☐ $6,000–$10,000
4. ☐ $10,000–$15,000
5. ☐ $15,000–$20,000
6. ☐ $20,000 and above

(9) **Do your school age children have to help significantly with the operation of the family business or property? (✓)**

	YES 1	NO 2
1st school age child (eldest)	☐	☐
2nd school age child	☐	☐
3rd school age child	☐	☐
4th school age child	☐	☐
5th school age child	☐	☐

(10) **Where a child has had to leave school to return home to work on the farm or family business, please provide details below.**

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SECTION C: GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DETAILS

(11) **What is the highest level of schooling reached by each parent (or guardian).**
If schooling was completed in another state or overseas, give the grade which is most nearly the same.

Father (✓one box only)	Mother (✓one box only)
14 ☐ Never attended school	14 ☐ Never attended school
Attended Primary School	Attended Primary School
Grade or Form 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐	Grade or Form 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐
Attended Secondary School	Attended Secondary School
Grade or Form 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐	Grade or Form 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐
15 ☐ Tertiary Education	15 ☐ Tertiary Education

(12) **How far is the closest primary school?** ☐ mls or ☐ kms

How long does the journey normally take by car? ☐ hrs

Do you have access to a school transport service to a primary school? (✓) Yes 1. ☐ No 2. ☐

If *yes*, but service is *not* used, briefly state reason

☐ OFFICE USE ☐

What do you consider to be the longest daily (one way) journey which a child should have to make to attend primary school? ☐ hrs

(13) **How far is the closest secondary school?** ☐ mls or ☐ kms

How long does the journey normally take by car? ☐ hrs

Do you have access to a school transport service to a secondary school? (✓) Yes 1. ☐ No 2. ☐

If *yes*, but service is *not* used, briefly state reason

☐ OFFICE USE ☐

What do you consider to be the longest daily (one way) journey which a child should have to make to attend secondary school? ☐ hrs

SECTION D: DETAILS OF REMOTENESS

(14) **Which town is easiest to visit?**

How far is it? mls or kms

How long does the trip take? hrs

(15) **Name the town where you conduct most of your business**

How far is it? mls or kms

How long does the trip take? hrs

(16) **How often do you visit the town where you conduct your business?** (✓)

1. ☐ Several times a week
2. ☐ Once a week
3. ☐ Once a fortnight
4. ☐ Once a month
5. ☐ Less than once a month

(17) **Do you have a mail delivery service direct to your home?** (✓)

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

If *yes*, how often is the mail delivered?

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If *no*, how often would you *collect* the mail?

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(18) **Is the delivery service affected by the 'wet' season?** (✓)

1. ☐ Yes
2. ☐ No

If yes, please give details including frequency and duration.

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SECTION E: DETAILS OF CHILDRENS' EDUCATION

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(19)

Please provide information for each child attending primary or secondary school (i.e. Grades 1–12)

Work down each column for each student

The eldest school child should be placed in the 1st child column, the second eldest school child in the 2nd child column and so on.

		1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child
(20)	Age in years					
(21)	Sex of student (✓)	1. ☐ M 2. ☐ F	1. ☐ M 2. ☐ F	1. ☐ M 2. ☐ F	1. ☐ M 2. ☐ F	1. ☐ M 2. ☐ F
(22)	Grade at school					
(23)	Name of school					
(24)	Type of school (✓)	1. ☐ State 2. ☐ Other	1. ☐ State 2. ☐ Other	1. ☐ State 2. ☐ Other	1. ☐ State 2. ☐ Other	1. ☐ State 2. ☐ Other
(25)	Town or City where school is located					
(26)	Type of Education Arrangement	1. ☐ Boarding School 2. ☐ Hostel 3. ☐ Private Board 4. ☐ Second Home 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ At home attending school daily	1. ☐ Boarding School 2. ☐ Hostel 3. ☐ Private Board 4. ☐ Second Home 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ At home attending school daily	1. ☐ Boarding School 2. ☐ Hostel 3. ☐ Private Board 4. ☐ Second Home 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ At home attending school daily	1. ☐ Boarding School 2. ☐ Hostel 3. ☐ Private Board 4. ☐ Second Home 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ At home attending school daily	1. ☐ Boarding School 2. ☐ Hostel 3. ☐ Private Board 4. ☐ Second Home 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ At home attending school daily

(27) **Please provide details of home visits by children (✓)**

Note: This question applies only to parents with children living away from home.
If it does not apply draw a line through this section.

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child
1. Child returns home	1. ☐ Weekly 2. ☐ Monthly 3. ☐ Once a term 4. ☐ Once a year	1. ☐ Weekly 2. ☐ Monthly 3. ☐ Once a term 4. ☐ Once a year	1. ☐ Weekly 2. ☐ Monthly 3. ☐ Once a term 4. ☐ Once a year	1. ☐ Weekly 2. ☐ Monthly 3. ☐ Once a term 4. ☐ Once a year	1. ☐ Weekly 2. ☐ Monthly 3. ☐ Once a term 4. ☐ Once a year
2. Main mode of travel	5. ☐ Car 6. ☐ Bus 7. ☐ Train 8. ☐ Plane	5. ☐ Car 6. ☐ Bus 7. ☐ Train 8. ☐ Plane	5. ☐ Car 6. ☐ Bus 7. ☐ Train 8. ☐ Plane	5. ☐ Car 6. ☐ Bus 7. ☐ Train 8. ☐ Plane	5. ☐ Car 6. ☐ Bus 7. ☐ Train 8. ☐ Plane
3. Parental visits to child	9. ☐ Once per year 10. ☐ Twice a year 11. ☐ More than twice 12. ☐ No visits	9. ☐ Once per year 10. ☐ Twice a year 11. ☐ More than twice 12. ☐ No visits	9. ☐ Once per year 10. ☐ Twice a year 11. ☐ More than twice 12. ☐ No visits	9. ☐ Once per year 10. ☐ Twice a year 11. ☐ More than twice 12. ☐ No visits	9. ☐ Once per year 10. ☐ Twice a year 11. ☐ More than twice 12. ☐ No visits

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(28) **What were the estimated costs of educating your children in 1977?**
(The eldest school child should be placed in the 1st column, etc.)

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child
	$	$	$	$	$
Boarding fees					
Tuition Costs					
Travel Costs					
TOTAL COSTS					

(29) **Which of these education allowances did you receive in 1977? (✓)**

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child
STATE	1. ☐ Remote area 2. ☐ Student Allowance 3. ☐ Senior Remote Area	1. ☐ Remote area 2. ☐ Student Allowance 3. ☐ Senior Remote Area	1. ☐ Remote area 2. ☐ Student Allowance 3. ☐ Senior Remote Area	1. ☐ Remote area 2. ☐ Student Allowance 3. ☐ Senior Remote Area	1. ☐ Remote area 2. ☐ Student Allowance 3. ☐ Senior Remote Area
COMMON-WEALTH	4. ☐ Boarding 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ Second Home	4. ☐ Boarding 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ Second Home	4. ☐ Boarding 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ Second Home	4. ☐ Boarding 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ Second Home	4. ☐ Boarding 5. ☐ Correspondence 6. ☐ Second Home

(30) **What is the total value of these educational allowances?** $

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[30]

(31) **How adequate are these allowances?**
Please provide comments, suggestions, recommendations in the space provided below.

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SECTION F: OPINIONS ON SCHOOL AND SCHOOLING

(32) **Please indicate the relative importance of the following factors in choosing board away from home for your children.**

Number the squares according to your preferences from *1 to 5.*

(One (1) indicates the most important factor, two (2) the second most important and so on.)

- ☐ Boarding &/or tuition fees
- ☐ Supervision out of school hours
- ☐ High educational standard
- ☐ High standard of accommodation
- ☐ Availability of sporting and other extra-curricular activities
- ☐ Other (please specify)
  e.g. Religious instruction
  Distance from family home etc.

(33) **What level of education do you expect each of your children to reach? (✓)**

(The eldest school child should be placed in the 1st child column, the second eldest school child in the 2nd child column and so on.)

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child
University or College of Advanced Education	1. ☐	1. ☐	1. ☐	1. ☐	1. ☐
Complete Grade 12	2. ☐	2. ☐	2. ☐	2. ☐	2. ☐
Grade 11–12	3. ☐	3. ☐	3. ☐	3. ☐	3. ☐
Complete Grade 10	4. ☐	4. ☐	4. ☐	4. ☐	4. ☐
Trade Training Courses	5. ☐	5. ☐	5. ☐	5. ☐	5. ☐
Other, e.g. Rural Training	6. ☐	6. ☐	6. ☐	6. ☐	6. ☐

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Please give your opinion about the following statements
(✓) the appropriate box for each statement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
(34) The education my children presently receive is satisfactory.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(35) Attendance at a church school is very important.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(36) I expect my children will have to seek employment in a city.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(37) A good education justifies separation of children from the family.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(38) Contact with children their own age justifies separation from the family.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(39) If necessary a family should borrow money to send children away to school.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(40) Boarding facilities close enough for children to return home on weekends is better than board at more distant towns.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(41) A family should be prepared to move to the city to ensure that their children receive the best possible education.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(42) I would rather drive my children to and from school each day than supervise their correspondence lessons.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(43) I would prefer my children board away from home than drive them long distances to and from school.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(44) Private board is better than hostels.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(45) Private board is better than boarding schools.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5
(46) Hostels are preferable to boarding schools.	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5

(47) Give the main reasons you have chosen to send, or not to send, your children away to school.

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(48) If there are any other comments you would care to make, please do so in the space provided

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Thank you for your co-operation.
Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

SURVEY OF STUDENT BOARDING FACILITIES IN QUEENSLAND

HOSTEL QUESTIONNAIRE

PLANNING BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION QUEENSLAND
OCTOBER 1977

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer all questions applicable to your hostel
2. Insert only one answer for each square
3. Please print answers in block capitals to ensure legibility
4. Comments or explanations may be added in the spaces provided
5. Any queries regarding the completion or return of this questionnaire should be addressed to:

   Mr P.R. Todhunter, Research Officer, Planning Branch,
   Department of Education, P.O. Box 33, NORTH QUAY. Q. 4000.
   (Telephone: 224 7395)

1. NAME OF HOSTEL

2. LOCATION
   - Number
   - Street
   - Town
   - Post Code

3. TELEPHONE
   - STD Code
   - Local No.

4. SPONSORING BODY

5. NAME OF MANAGER OR MATRON

The information provided in this questionnaire is for Departmental use only and will not be provided on an individual hostel basis to any other person or organisation.

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SECTION A : NON FINANCIAL DATA

6. NUMBER OF STUDENT BOARDERS

1.) Please indicate the number of student boarding spaces available in the following years.

	Male	Female	Total
1974			
1976			
1977			
1978 (est.)			

2.) State number of spaces occupied by students at the end of third term during the same period.

	Students		Non-Students	Total
	Male	Female		
1974				
1976				
1977				
1978(est.)				

3.) How many student boarders in 1977 are attending secondary schools? [ ]

4.) How many student boarders attended secondary schools in 1974? [ ]

5.) Relevant Comment (if any).....
.....
.....

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5)

6.) How many student boarders in 1977 attend the hostel only 5 days a week?

Primary	Secondary

7.) How many students would have boarded 5 days a week in 1974

Primary	Secondary

8.) Relevant Comment (if any).....
.....
.....

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8)

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7. SCHOOLS ATTENDED BY HOSTEL BOARDERS

	School Type	Distance from Hostel (Kms)	No. Boarders Attending
1.	State Primary		
2.	Secondary Top		
3.	State Secondary		
4.	Catholic Primary		
5.	Catholic Secondary		
6.	Independent Primary		
7.	Independent Secondary		

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8.	

9. STUDENT PROFILE

The student profile is designed to record student information on a family basis.

Each family should be recorded on a separate line.

Line 0 shows how a sample family might be recorded.

It is important to match the grade and sex of the children.

Where children continue to board at the hostel during the May or August holidays, please tick the column marked HB (holiday board).

	Occupation of Main Income Earner	No. of Children in Hostel	Relevant School Grades	Sex of Children	No. of Full Time (7 day) Boarders	Approx. Distance from Home to Hostel in Kms.	Mode of Travel between Home & Hostel	HB
0	Baker	3	12/10/7	M/F/M	3	450 Kms	Train	✓
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								

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	Occupation of Main Income Earner	No. of Children in Hostel	Relevant School Grades	Sex of Children	No. of Full Time (7 day) Boarders	Approx. Distance From Home to Hostel in Kms.	Mode of Travel between Home & Hostel	NB
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								
16								
17								
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								
23								
24								
25								

NB: Extra pages have been included for large hostels needing additional space. These may be found at the end of this questionnaire.

9. DETAILS OF HOSTEL STAFF

1. Full Time Live-In Staff

	Designation	Male or Female	Duties	No. of Years in Present Position	Average No. of Hours per week

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9. DETAILS OF HOSTEL STAFF (CONT.)

2. Other Full Time Staff

	Designation	Male or Female	Duties	No. of Years in Present Position	Average No. of Hours per week

3. Part-Time Staff

	Designation	Male or Female	Duties	No. of Years in Present Position	Average No. of Hours per week

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9. DETAILS OF HOSTEL STAFF (CONT.)

4. Section 4 is set aside for your comments. Please give details of your major staffing problems eg. How difficult is it to recruit and/or keep suitably qualified staff? Can they be recruited locally? Are award wages sufficient? How many hours of overtime have to be worked? Have you any practical suggestions which could alleviate these problems?

Comments

5. Please comment on the existence of/or need for additional staff for such services as student counselling, etc_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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10. OVERVIEW OF HOSTEL HISTORY

		OFFICE USE ONLY
1	When was the hostel established?	
2	Why was it established?	
3	By whom was it established?	
4	What are the major problems facing the hostel's continuation?	

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11. OVERVIEW OF HOSTEL FACILITIES

1	What is the main material used in the construction of the hostel? 1. external walls_____ 2. internal walls_____ 3. roof_____	OFFICE USE ONLY
2	What is the current estimated value of the hostel?	
3	Briefly list details of any extensions carried out in the last 5 years. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
4	What repairs are presently needed? What is their estimated cost? 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	

5 PLEASE ATTACH A ROUGH SKETCH (A BASIC FLOOR PLAN) OF THE HOSTEL.

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12 OVERVIEW OF STUDENT FACILITIES

1	What study facilities exist for each student?	OFFICE USE ONLY
2	What organisational arrangements are made to ensure homework/study is done?	
3	Do the more senior students enjoy any special study facilities?	
4	What facilities are provided for each student to store his personal belongings?	

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12. OVERVIEW OF STUDENT FACILITIES (CONT.)

		OFFICE USE ONLY
5	What communal facilities does the hostel have eg. lounge, TV room, games room, library?	
6	What recreational/sporting facilities exist for student use?	
7	What activities, visits, etc., are usually organised at week ends?	
8	Any other relevant comments?	

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SECTION B : FINANCIAL STATISTICS

(I) RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

13. HOSTEL FEES

Please provide answers to the following queries in respect of term fees paid in 1977.

		($)
1. Basic term fee	1. 5 day	
	2. 7 day	
2. Additional term fees including laundry, etc.	1. 5 day	
	2. 7 day	
3. Family fee per term (if applicable)	1. 5 day	
	2. 7 day	
4. Do basic fees vary with age or grade? If so, give details.		OFFICE USE ONLY
5. PLEASE ATTACH THE SCHEDULE OF FEES AND COMPULSORY CHARGES AS NOTIFIED TO PARENTS FOR THIRD TERM 1977.		

6. We understand it has been necessary to increase fees considerably in recent years. Please indicate what basic fee was charged in the following years.

Year	Basic Term Fee (for full-time boarder)	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	
1. 1974		
2. 1976		
3. 1977		
4. 1978(est.)		

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14. DEBTS FROM FEES

1. Total amount of outstanding fees	
2. No. of children involved	
3. No. of families involved	
4. How long are debts usually carried	
5. Any relevant comments regarding trends, prospects of recovery, etc.	OFFICE USE ONLY

15. ANNUAL INCOME

Type of Annual Income	1974	1976	OFFICE USE ONLY
1. Total Boarding Fees	($)	($)	
2. Other Additional Fees			
3. State Capita Grants			
4. Other Subsidies			
5. Donations			
6. Total			

16. Please make whatever comments you can in regard to income for 1977 using the same sub-totals utilised above. In addition, what is the outlook for 1978?

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17. ANNUAL RUNNING COSTS (RECURRENT EXPENDITURE)

Recurrent Costs	1974	1976	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	($)	
1. Salaries & Wages			
2. Provisions & Foodstuffs			
3. Rates & Taxes			
4. Other Costs*			
5. Total			

* Please attach a list of these costs if you think it would be helpful.

18. Please make whatever comments you can in regard to running costs for 1977 using the same sub-totals utilised above. What is the outlook for 1978?

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19. RECURRENT FUNDS - SURPLUS/DEFICIT

Compare tables 15 and 17 and show results below.

Year	Surplus	Deficit	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	($)	
1. 1974			
2. 1976			
3. 1977(est.)			
4. 1978(est.)			

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SECTION B : FINANCIAL STATISTICS (CONTD)

(II) CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

20. SOURCES OF CAPITAL FUNDS

Please provide details of funds acquired for capital (building) purposes.

	1974	1976	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	($)	
1. Surplus (if any) from current account (i.e. table 19)			
2. State Government Grants			
3. Commonwealth Government Grants			
4. Donations for capital purposes from parish, parent organisations, building funds or bequests			
5. Personal Fund raising activites	*	*	
6. Long term loans (from bank, shire, state government, etc.)			
7. Total			

* Please attach details if you think this would be helpful.

21. Any relevant comments on the above in respect of 1977 and/or prospects for 1978?

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22. DETAILS OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Please provide details of funds expended on capital (building) purposes.

	1974	1976	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	($)	
1. Long term loan repayments			
2. Building projects			
3. Purchase of fixed assets 1. land 2. buildings 3. furniture & fittings			
4. Other capital costs (specify or attach list)			
5. Total			

23. Any relevant comments on the above in respect of 1977 and/or prospects for 1978?

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24. INCREASE/DECREASE IN WORKING CAPITAL

Compare tables 20 and 22 and indicate results below.

Year	Surplus	Deficit	OFFICE USE ONLY
	($)	($)	
1. 1974			
2. 1976			
3. 1977(est.)			
4. 1978(est.)			

25. SPECIAL FACTORS OR CIRCUMSTANCES

Outline in a brief statement details of special factors or circumstances which it is desired to bring to the notice of the Department of Education. This may include suggestions, recommendations, etc.

Thank you for your co-operation
Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

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8. STUDENT PROFILE (CONT.)

The student profile is designed to record student information on a family basis.

Each family should be recorded on a separate line.

	Occupation of Main Income Earner	No. of Children in Hostel	Relevant School Grades	Sex of Children	No. of Full Time (7 day) Boarders	Approx. Distance from Home to Hostel in Kms.	Mode of Travel between Home & Hostel	HB
0	Baker	3	12/10/7	M/F/M	3	450 Kms	Train	√
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
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